The Dissertation Committee for Mitsi Pair Willard Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Novice Foreign Language Teachers' Teaching Efficacy Beliefs and Perceptions of Professional Support: A Mixed-Methods Study

Committee:

Marilla Svinicki, Supervisor

Elaine K. Horwitz

Cynthia Salinas

Malia LeMond

Deborah Palmer

Novice Foreign Language Teachers' Teaching Efficacy Beliefs and Perceptions of Professional Support: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Mitsi Pair Willard, B.A.; M.A.

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Dedication

To my husband Josh, for his constant support and encouragement.

And to my daughter Mae, who enriches my life beyond words.

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Novice Foreign Language Teachers' Teaching Efficacy Beliefs and Perceptions of Professional Support: A Mixed-Methods Study

Mitsi Pair Willard, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: Marilla Svinicki

Self-efficacy is an individual's judgment of the relative probability of her or his likely success in attaining desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). For teachers, efficacy beliefs serve as an assessment of their own abilities to promote student learning. Efficacy beliefs are content-specific and are believed to form early in teachers' professional careers. While studies on teachers' sense of efficacy have examined content areas such as math and science (Mulholland & Wallace, 2001; Riggs & Enochs, 1990), very little research has been conducted to explore the perceived efficacy beliefs of beginning foreign language (FL) teachers.

Using a mixed methods approach, this investigation explored factors influencing the teaching efficacy beliefs of FL teachers in a major urban school district in north Texas, as well as the potential relationship between their perceptions of efficacy and professional support. Quantitative data included surveys of FL teachers' efficacy beliefs and perceptions of support. Qualitative data was comprised of case studies, including interviews, observations, and documents collected from four novice FL teachers, all of whom entered the classroom via alternative routes to certification.

Cross-case analyses suggest that FL teachers often felt their content area was devalued by administrators, colleagues, and students as a result of its status as a non-tested content area. The efficacy beliefs of the novice FL teachers were influenced in part by contextual factors of their respective schools, including professional isolation as a result of being the only FL teacher on campus, support of colleagues, and the availability of time and resources. Because the four case study participants lacked the benefit of traditional university-based certification, they demonstrated tendencies to rely on their "selected memories," making sense of their role(s) as teacher via the perspective acquired when they were students.

Findings of the study suggest that FL teachers often experience "Stepchild Syndrome," marked by professional isolation, a lack of relevant professional development opportunities, and a shortage of pertinent resources for FL teaching. The speculative nature of alternatively certified FL teachers' efficacy beliefs is also examined. The study draws implications for supporting beginning FL teachers, particularly those who enter the profession through alternative routes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is an individual's judgment of the relative probability of her or his likely success in attaining desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). For teachers, it serves as an assessment of their own abilities to promote student learning (Bruning, Flowerday, & Trayer, 1999; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005). Teachers' perceived capabilities seem to have direct influence on their teaching practices, including their persistence in the face of setbacks, willingness to experiment with new ideas, greater degrees of planning and organization, and increases in student achievement and motivation (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Chacón, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998).

Efficacy beliefs are specific to the content one teaches (Riggs and Enochs, 1990; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). While efficacy studies have investigated teacher efficacy in specific content areas such as math and science (Mulholland & Wallace, 2001; Riggs & Enochs, 1990), very little research has been conducted to explore the perceived efficacy beliefs of beginning foreign language (FL) teachers (Swanson, 2010). In one of the few examples, Bruning et al. (1999) state that teachers' efficacy beliefs play a critical role in foreign language (FL) classroom. Chacón (2005) identified a connection between FL teachers' target language proficiency and their efficacy beliefs for student engagement and instructional strategies. Because FL teaching presents a unique set of characteristics which distinguish it from other content areas (Borg, 2006; Hammadou & Bernhardt, 1987; Horwitz, 1996; Vélez-Rendón, 2002), the influence of efficacy beliefs within this field is deserving of more dedicated study.

Swanson (2010) notes that teacher shortages nation-wide are typically in math, science, special education, bilingual education, and FL. Although the shortage of math and science teachers is widely recognized, the attrition of FL teachers receives less public attention (Swanson, 2010). As the retention of FL teachers nation-wide is particularly problematic, and FL teachers' efficacy beliefs are related to their commitment and retention (Coladarci, 1992), the study of FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy is worthwhile.

The influence of high personal teaching efficacy beliefs on teachers' behaviors in general, and ultimately the successes of their students has been supported in a number of studies (Chacón, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Swanson, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990), although these are not without criticism. The majority of these studies were based on teacher self-reports, collected exclusively via quantitative instruments. In his 2005 article, Wheatley confronted the practicality of measuring teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy, asserting that the potential multiplicity of meanings behind self-reports of teacher efficacy beliefs makes it difficult for teacher educators to interpret and utilize such information. Wheatley asserts that, "…teachers' efficacy beliefs simply cannot be communicated meaningfully by numbers" (p. 759). Because survey data gives a limited view on teachers' efficacy beliefs, in-depth interpretive studies of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy should be conducted in order to better evaluate specific factors that influence these beliefs. Studies employing a qualitative and interpretive approach to investigate teachers' perceptions of efficacy are lacking in the field. Such perspectives are needed so that data regarding

teachers' perceptions of efficacy can be more easily accessed and applied by teacher educators and others who work to ensure the success of beginning teachers.

The development of policies and programs for supporting the development of FL teachers has traditionally relied on theoretical definitions and perceptions of experienced FL educators, rather than the principled gathering of data and researched understandings (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Watzke, 2007). Much of the literature on FL teachers and their development focuses on their pre-service experiences. While these years are of serious concern for the preparation of teachers, less research exists that concentrates on the practices, beliefs, and development of in-service FL teachers. According to Watzke (2007):

> Little is understood about the transition into full-time, in-service teaching. In particular, we do not yet understand what happens…once beginning FL teachers are on their own in the classroom or how to support their continued professional development. (p.66)

The retention of qualified FL teachers is needed in order to combat Texas' state-wide shortage (TEA, 2001). To support the retention of FL teachers, an examination of what support they find most meaningful—as well as what is actually provided—is necessary (Andrews, Gilbert, & Martin, 2007). Because the early years of teaching are most vital for the long-term development of personal teaching efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005), the connection between FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and their teaching efficacy beliefs should be explored as they first assume their professional positions.

I designed this dissertation to explore the teaching efficacy beliefs of in-service FL teachers within their first few years as practicing professionals. Additionally, I explored beginning FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and how such support impacted their sense of efficacy for teaching. I employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis, in which I conducted interviews and observations with four FL teachers in a major urban school district in Texas. These interpretive approaches—in addition to data gathered with a quantitative survey traditionally used in research on teachers' efficacy beliefs—gave me insights on what happens once FL teachers are "on their own in the classroom" as well as needed areas for their continued professional growth. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What influences beginning FL teachers' perceptions of personal teaching efficacy?
2. What, if any, relationship exists between FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and teaching efficacy?

Although not my original intent, the interplay between FL teachers' alternative routes to certification and their perceptions of support and efficacy became an important topic within my study.

DEFINITIONS

Beginning teacher/Novice teacher

Throughout this study, I use the terms "beginning" and "novice" to describe the prior experience of the teacher participants within this study. Those who were in their first year in the classroom I name "beginner" or "beginning" teachers. I also use the term

"novice" to describe teachers who were beginning their first, second, or third year in the classroom during the time of this study.

Foreign Language (FL)

I use the term "foreign language" (FL) to describe the content taught by the participants in this study. The term "World Languages" was specifically used by the district in which I conducted my research. Similar programs might use the title "Languages Other Than English" (LOTE). I chose to use the term "foreign language" in part because my degree program also uses this terminology. For the purposes of this study, FL excludes bilingual and/or dual-language programs, as well as English as a second language (ESL) programs.

PREVIEW OF REMAINING CHAPTERS

In the next chapter, I review the research literature on teaching self-efficacy and professional support for FL teachers. Chapter 3 details the methodology I employed in conducting this study. Chapter 4 reveals the results of the quantitative portion of the study and the analysis of those data. Chapters 5-7 review the major themes which emerged from the qualitative portions of the study. Chapter 8 integrates findings from the quantitative and qualitative components of the study, draws conclusions and "Big Picture" findings, and presents areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter examines the existing research on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, their development, and how teaching experience affects one's perceptions of efficacy. Studies addressing support, particularly for beginning teachers, are also described. The chapter concludes with a section considering the interplay between teachers' efficacy beliefs and the professional support they receive, and explains how this study attempts to fill in gaps in the existing literature.

SELF-EFFICACY

Influenced in great part by the work of Bandura (1977, 1997), the role of self-efficacy in educational contexts has recently come to the forefront of research in educational psychology. Self-efficacy is "an individual's judgment of the relative probability of her or his likely success in attaining desired outcomes" (Bruning, et al., 1999). One's judgment of self-efficacy is comprised of his/her perceptions of competence, as opposed to his/her actual level of competence (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Efficacy beliefs are distinct from self-worth, self-esteem, and the like, in that efficacy beliefs are both task- and context-specific.

The Development of Efficacy

Bandura (1977, 1997) identifies four principle sources of self-efficacy beliefs: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological cues. Through mastery experiences, people develop beliefs about their capabilities to perform certain tasks. Successes or failures in such undertakings influence perceptions of efficacy

for specific tasks. Success typically strengthens one's perceptions of efficacy, while experiencing failure weakens efficacy beliefs. Bandura asserts that "…mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed" (1997, p. 80).

Through vicarious learning experiences, i.e. modeling, a learner evaluates his or her abilities to perform a task as a result of observing others carry out the same or similar task(s). This source of efficacy beliefs often occurs in social comparison, in which one's capabilities are assessed in relation to the accomplishments of others. Through vicarious experiences, one derives self-evaluations by comparing himself/herself with others who are similar in the ability or characteristics begin evaluated (Schunk, 1989). Information acquired via vicarious experiences may be less influential than performance-based efficacy beliefs, as it can be negated by subsequent failure (Schunk, 1989; Swanson, 2010).

Verbal persuasion is also sometimes referred to as social persuasion (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005). The feedback received from significant others regarding his or her achievements can strengthen an individual's beliefs of his/her capability to attain desired goals and outcomes. When considered apart from other sources of efficacy, verbal persuasion is limited in its power to create enduring increases in efficacy. Nevertheless, social persuasion has the potential to bolster self-initiated change. However, if verbal

persuasion serves to raise unrealistic beliefs of one's personal capabilities, it invites failure, thus undermining perceptions of efficacy.

The impact of physiological cues comprises affective states which influence a learner's beliefs about his or her capabilities to perform specific tasks. The influences of mood, level of stress, and other somatic indicators on one's perceptions of efficacy are particularly relevant in such domains as physical accomplishment, health functioning, and coping with stress (Bandura, 1997).

Teaching efficacy

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs serve as a predictor of teacher performance (Newman, Lenhart, Moss, & Newman, 2000). There is evidence that strong teacher efficacy beliefs are linked to desirable teacher characteristics, including greater levels of planning and organization, willingness to experiment with new ideas, greater patience with students' errors, and persistence and resilience in the face of setbacks (Chacón, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Teacher efficacy is both content-specific (Riggs and Enochs, 1990) and context-specific (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, 2007; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005). Because of the impact beliefs may have on motivation, effort, and persistence, further research on teacher self-efficacy is of great relevance for beginning teachers, as well as for teacher educators, and others whose work involves novice educators.

Efficacy and Experience

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may be influenced by their level(s) of experience (Calderhead, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005). Efficacy beliefs are thought to be most malleable early in learning. For novice teachers, this implies that the early years of teaching may be the most vital in the long-term development of personal teaching efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

In a four-year cross sectional study, Newman et al. (2000) identified a "roller coaster" pattern in pre-service teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy throughout their internship and student teaching experiences. The researchers found that pre-service teachers reported high efficacy levels at the beginning of their internship semester, primarily as a result of feeling that they were able to positively impact student learning. The majority of pre-service student teachers experienced a drop in levels of efficacy midway through their field experiences. At that point in their internships, a number of students had begun to question their teaching skills and their suitability for the teaching profession. However, by the end of the student teaching semester, pre-service teachers' efficacy levels rose once more, due in great part to their mastery experiences with demonstrated skill and success during their student teaching.

The movement toward increases in perceived efficacy among pre-service teachers has also been noted in work by Fives, Hamman and Olivarez (2007), Woolfolk and Hoy (1990), and Woolfolk Hoy and Spero (2005). Fives et al. (2007), noted the rise and fall in pre-service teachers' perceptions of efficacy through their analysis of student self-reports on a battery of questionnaires, including the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale

(TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), and Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986). Results of their quantitative analyses illustrated that student-teachers experienced an initial increase in feelings of personal teaching efficacy as a result of their mastery experiences in the classroom. However, the same teachers reported a decrease in perceptions of efficacy during their tenure as student-teachers. Perceived support from cooperating teachers and university supervisors during the field experience affected these efficacy perceptions—student-teachers who received higher amounts of guidance from cooperating teachers were more prone to develop high levels of efficacy for instructional practices. Although teacher educators are unable to instill efficacy within their students, they may be able to assist them in strengthening their personal perceptions of teaching efficacy (Poulou, 2007).

Though limited studies have examined what happens to the efficacy beliefs of novice teachers as they transition into full-time teaching, the "reality shock" of facing the demands and expectations required of classroom teachers may lead to decreased perceptions of personal teaching efficacy (Weinstein, 1988). Friedman's (2000) qualitative work with first year teachers in Israel connected early teaching burnout to teachers' "shattered dreams of impeccable professional performance" (p. 595). Efficacy beliefs of novice teachers may be linked to stress, commitment to the profession, and their satisfaction with preparation and support (Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Efficacy and Foreign Language (FL) Teaching

FL teaching is typified by a unique set of characteristics. Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) note that the subject matter itself, in addition to difficulties teachers

face in increasing their own subject matter knowledge, a dearth of content-area colleagues, and problems obtaining outside support for learning the subject matter, set FL teaching apart from other subject areas. Hammadou-Sullivan (2001) notes that in FL teaching the content cannot be separated from the means of delivering the content; she declares, "The medium is the message." Horwitz (1996) notes that:

> Even though language teachers are supposed to be high-level speakers of their target language, language learning is never complete, and most nonnative language teachers are likely to have uncomfortable moments speaking their target language. (p. 365)

Horwitz goes on to state that teachers' FL anxiety is potentially detrimental to their mental well-being, as well as their job satisfaction.

Borg (2006) claims that "language teaching is a political activity" (p. 13) which has a dimension of power and control over how learners think of the target culture. He goes on to describe the complexity and variety of the content and difficulties for teachers of FL to remain up-to-date with subject matter. Borg summarizes that, "Language teachers' distinctiveness is a socially constructed phenomenon that may be defined in various ways in different contexts" (2006, p. 26).

In his rationale for creating an instrument to measure the efficacy beliefs of FL teachers, Swanson (2010) notes a nation-wide shortage of qualified FL teachers. He also cites studies claiming that attrition rates of FL teachers are often higher than those of teachers in many other content areas. The Texas Education Agency also notes a shortage of qualified FL teachers in the state (2001), due in part to adjustments in the basic

graduation plan, which required that all high school students complete two credits in a FL in order to graduate.

Bruning et al. (1999) assert that efficacy has a critical role within the FL classroom. FL teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy are generally more likely to be more effective teachers and thus better able to produce desired learning outcomes in their students. This sentiment is echoed by Chacón (2005) in her study of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in schools in Venezuela, who found that FL teachers with greater proficiency in the target language had higher efficacy for teaching. As part of her investigation, Chacón administered an adapted version of the TSES as well as a self-report of English Language Proficiency. Correlations between self-reports of language proficiency and teaching efficacy revealed that teachers with greater language proficiency typically had greater self-efficacy to engage students and orchestrate strategies for instruction. FL teachers' confidence about their capabilities in using the target language may affect their perceived efficacy to bring about student change and learning. According to Chacón (2005), subject matter knowledge—marked by FL proficiency—is especially critical in FL teaching.

The majority of studies on teachers' efficacy beliefs (Chacón, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Swanson, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990) have been based primarily on teacher self reports collected exclusively via quantitative instruments. Wheatley (2005) addressed the practicality of measuring teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy, stating that the potential multiplicity of meanings behind self-reports of teacher efficacy beliefs makes it difficult for teacher educators to

interpret and utilize such information. Wheatley asserts that, "…teachers' efficacy beliefs simply cannot be communicated meaningfully by numbers" (p. 759). Because survey data gives a limited view on teachers' efficacy beliefs, it is important that in-depth interpretive studies of beginning teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy are conducted in order to better evaluate specific factors which influence these beliefs. By incorporating qualitative case studies into this mixed-methods study and telling the stories of four novice FL teachers in a major urban district, I aimed to address the methodological gap in studies of teachers' efficacy beliefs. My intent was to identify how teachers' perceptions of professional support interacted with their efficacy beliefs for teaching FL.

SUPPORT

Discussions of professional support for teachers frequently begin by acknowledging the increasing problem of teacher attrition. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003), almost half (46%) of all beginning teachers leave the classroom by the end of their first five years of teaching, with approximately 14% leaving after year one and 33% leaving within three years. This problem is often magnified within urban districts and those which serve low-income and minority students (Andrews, Gilbert & Martin, 2007). This high rate of attrition among teachers who are leaving for reasons other than retirement is largely responsible for the nation-wide teacher shortage. Such attrition results in high costs for schools, school systems, and students (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

A prevalent reason for widespread teacher attrition is the lack of appropriate support in the early years of teaching (Andrews et al., 2007).

Support for Beginning Teachers

Entering the teaching profession brings with it an inherent set of challenges. Feiman-Nemser (2001) succinctly describes the challenges that many beginning teachers face:

> New teachers have two jobs—they have to teach and they have to learn how to teach…The first years of teaching are an intense and formative time in learning to teach, influencing not only whether people remain in teaching but what kind of teacher they become. (p. 1026)

Adequate support for novice professionals is an essential component in teacher development, which often has an effect on teachers' decisions to remain in the field as well as the professional characteristics they will acquire.

In attempts to provide such support for beginning teachers, many districts incorporate induction programs, defined by Andrews et al. (2007) as "an enculturation process in which the first few years of teaching are viewed as a phase when beginning teachers learn to teach" (p. 5). Such programs, which often include mentoring, continuous relevant professional development, and time for planning and collaboration with other teachers within the same grade level or content-areas, have shown positive benefits for beginning teacher retention, notably in at-risk schools (Andrews et al., 2007). In addition to induction programs, a number of factors that contribute to beginning teachers' perceptions of support have been documented in research. Some of these include support in the form of available resources, administrative support, support from a mentor, and collegial support (Corbell, Reiman, & Nietfeld, 2008).

In order to determine what types of support beginning teachers value and what kinds they actually receive, Andrews et al. (2007) surveyed 275 1st and 2nd year teachers in the state of Georgia. Results of their study concluded that more than half of the beginning teachers received the support of an assigned mentor, special orientation sessions, special handbooks and materials, and professional development for beginning teachers throughout the school year.

However, none of these strategies was reported as being the most valued form of support by the novice teachers. Strategies that provided opportunities to collaborate with other teachers, such as co-planning time and opportunities to observe other teachers' classrooms were described as most valuable by the teachers surveyed (Andrews et al., 2007). Results of this study are supported by other work describing prevalent problems in beginning teacher support, some of which include: the lack of relevant professional support and feedback, inadequate orientation, limited opportunities for collaboration with veteran teachers, insufficient materials, and a lack of emotional support (Andrews et al., 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Marable & Raimondi, 2007).

Content-specific Support

In their 2004 study of effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher retention, Smith and Ingersoll assert that while many programs feature some variation of mentoring, those which provide content-specific mentoring are much more likely to decrease attrition than those in which the beginning teacher is simply paired with another teacher. Marable and Raimondi (2007) noted this trend as well; in their surveys of teachers who did and did not participate in formal mentoring programs, mentoring was

considered by many the most significant source of support in their induction year. Conversely, some respondents reported that mentors were not supportive, principally those who were paired with a mentor outside of their area.

In his longitudinal study of beginning foreign language teachers' and the evolution of their pedagogical content knowledge, Watzke (2007) focuses on the relevance of content-specific support for beginning FL teachers:

> Although content-specific mentoring is supported in the research literature on professional development, it is not always afforded the beginning teacher, particularly in the characteristically isolated high school environment…the next step toward improving professional development might benefit from content-specific professional support and mentoring that recognizes how the first years of teaching may affect the future development of pedagogical knowledge. (p. 75)

Content-specific support may prove to be an essential component of valuable mentoring, and is also relevant for alternative approaches to professional teacher development.

Content-specific support in foreign language teaching

Pertinent and meaningful content-specific support is more frequently available for teachers in "core curriculum" areas than in subjects such as fine arts, physical education, and FL. Teachers of the latter fields may suffer a distinct lack of support and meaningful supervision, as administrators often lack expertise within these content areas (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987). In their landmark article on the distinguishing traits of foreign language teaching, Hammadou and Bernhardt (1987) report:

> FL teachers often find themselves supervised, particularly at the secondary level, by administrators who do not know and may not even be able to recognize the language the teachers are using and teaching. Their comments, thus, tend to be perfunctory at best. (p. 303)

Furthermore, the pressures resulting from standards created by No Child Left Behind and standardized testing in content areas such as reading, math, and science lead toward increased administrator focus—and all too often fiscal focus—to support these tested content areas, while marginalizing others (Meyer, 2005). For beginning teachers in the "specials," the results can be discouraging—a lack of relevant professional support, limited available resources, and a dearth of colleagues within the same subject matter can severely restrict opportunities for beginning FL teachers' professional growth and development (Hammadou & Bernhardt, 1987).

Watzke (2007) calls for a transformation in the way that teacher development for beginning foreign language teachers is devised:

> Support for beginning FL teachers should…be framed within a purposefully planned and longer continuum that recognizes, facilitates, and provides a professional network of colleagues and integrated in-service experiences meeting the changing needs of maturing teachers. (p. 75)

While these measures would certainly be beneficial to beginning teachers in all subjects, the unique nature of FL teaching requires a distinctive approach to designing appropriate support for novice teachers within the field.

SUPPORT AND EFFICACY

It is clear from the research that perceptions of self-efficacy and support are issues of concern for beginning teachers. As teachers' perceptions of efficacy may be solidified early in their professional careers (Bandura, 1997) professional educators and administrators must understand how their support can influence novices' efficacy beliefs.

In his 1992 study, Coladarci set out to explore teachers' commitment to the profession and the potential relationship between their level of commitment and

perceptions of efficacy. The results of his survey of 170 elementary school teachers found that personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy were the strongest predictors of commitment to teaching. Commitment to the profession was also higher among teachers who reported support from administrators at the school level. In Coladarci's discussion, he notes a cyclical trend, "…features of school organization that promote a teachers' sense of efficacy may, in turn, promote that teachers' commitment to the organization and, therefore, to teaching" (p. 334).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2002, 2007) sought to uncover what types of support seem to matter most in the cultivation of teacher efficacy. They surveyed 255 novice and career teachers to see if differences existed between their potential sources of efficacy beliefs. Results of this inquiry revealed that teachers' perceived support was related to efficacy for novices with fewer than five years of teaching experiences. Teachers with more years of experience reported higher levels of efficacy than beginners. The authors speculated that teachers with low efficacy may be those who leave the profession within the first five years. They also found that novice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were more dependent on contextual factors and the availability of teaching resources than were the efficacy beliefs of their more experienced colleagues. The availability of resources and parental support were correlated with teachers' sense of efficacy, implying that these areas are of concern to teachers in assessing their personal capabilities for the teaching task. The authors theorized that because novice teachers had fewer mastery experiences, other sources of self-efficacy play a larger role in the formation of their efficacy beliefs. The support of colleagues and their communities, in

addition to the climate and structure of schools, were influential elements on novice teachers' beliefs of teaching efficacy. The authors noted that professional isolation, uncertainty, and alienation tended to weaken teachers' efficacy beliefs.

Woolfolk Hoy and Spero (2005) conducted a longitudinal study comparing four quantitative measures of self-efficacy for teachers during their pre-service education and through their transition to full-time teaching. Results of their study found that changes in efficacy during the first year of teaching were related to the level of support received—new teachers who reported higher perceptions of their own competence at the end of their first year in the classroom gave higher ratings to the adequacy of support they had received than did those who finished the year with lower perceptions of efficacy. Beginning teachers with lower reported efficacy also conveyed a "less optimistic view of what teachers could accomplish" (p. 346). As a result of this investigation, Woolfolk Hoy and Spero conclude that relevant support may help to protect one's perceptions of teaching efficacy during the early years in the classroom. The authors state that the identification of characteristics of schools which impact beginning teachers' beliefs should be explored. Furthermore, research should be conducted to understand how novice teachers' successes and disappointments interact with available support in the establishment of their long-term efficacy beliefs.

Relevant professional support for beginning teachers has the potential to help them foster high efficacy beliefs. Resources such as feedback and support from colleagues, administrators, and parents could serve as social persuasion (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005), motivating teachers in

their acquisition of mastery experiences. Effective mentoring with trained and experienced teachers of the same content area could provide novices with a helpful source of vicarious experience. Appropriate professional support for the teaching context could alleviate some of the stresses associated with induction-year teaching. The opportunities for interaction between support and efficacy are great. Studies examining the potential relationship between these two factors and their impact on beginning teachers have begun to scratch the surface, but further research is still needed. Because teachers' efficacy beliefs are shaped early in their careers, it would be useful to better understand what supports and undermines efficacy in the initial years of classroom teaching (Bandura, 1997; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005).

Much of the literature on FL teachers and their development focuses on their pre-service experiences. Fewer studies concentrate on the practices, beliefs, and development of in-service FL teachers. Watzke (2007) emphasizes the need to examine what happens when FL teachers are on their own in the classroom and how best to support their continued professional development. In order to combat Texas' state-wide shortage of qualified FL teachers and support their retention, studies of what support FL teachers find most meaningful are needed (Andrews, et al., 2007). Furthermore, because the early years of teaching are believed to be when teachers' efficacy beliefs are most malleable (Bandura, 1997; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998), the connection between FL teachers' perceptions of professional support in their first years of teaching and their teaching efficacy beliefs is deserving of study.

This study was designed to explore the teaching efficacy beliefs of in-service FL teachers within their first few years as practicing professionals. Additionally, the relationship between beginning FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and how such support impacted their sense of efficacy for teaching was explored. The incorporation of interpretive research approaches—in addition to data gathered via traditional surveys—gave me insights on what happens once FL teachers are "on their own in the classroom" as well as needed areas for their continued professional growth.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to examine the personal teaching efficacy of beginning FL teachers in a major urban public school district in Texas, as well as factors influencing such efficacy. The study also sought to explore the potential relationship between beginning FL teachers' personal teaching efficacy and perceptions of professional support; in particular, content-specific support. The principal questions guiding this inquiry were:

1. What influences beginning FL teachers' perceptions of personal teaching efficacy?
2. What, if any, relationship exists between FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and teaching efficacy?

RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed methods design, incorporating both survey and case study methodologies, was used in this study. This study used a concurrent triangulation strategy in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected between July and December of 2009, and later analyzed and compared with each other. In the quantitative portion of the study, I surveyed 47 FL teachers of Castlewood ISD, a major urban school district in north Texas. Following the survey administration, four novice[1] FL teachers from the District were selected for case studies in an effort to investigate their perceptions of teaching efficacy and support in greater depth. Research questions throughout both

[1] I use the term "novice" to describe teachers who were beginning their first, second, or third year in the classroom during the time of this study.

[2] All names used in this study—including those of the district, schools, and individual participants—are

phases of data collection addressed factors influencing FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy, their perceptions of support, and the potential relationship between efficacy and support.

I chose to employ a mixed methods design as it utilizes the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and allowed for triangulation of data sources. Furthermore, the results—both quantitative and qualitative—were used to reinforce one another (Creswell, 2009). While this form of research has a number of benefits, it also posed some challenges. As both quantitative and qualitative data were used in the study, data collection was quite extensive. Additionally, analyzing the data required me to be familiar with both quantitative and qualitative forms analysis, which proved to be time-intensive and demanding.

QUANTITATIVE APPROACH: SURVEY DESIGN

The collection of quantitative data occurred in August 2009 and entailed the administration of two self-report surveys to the teachers of Castlewood ISD during an in-service meeting prior to the first day of school. The surveys administered included the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and the Perceptions of Success Inventory (PSI; Corbell, Reiman, & Neitfeld, 2008).

These surveys were administered to document the teaching efficacy beliefs of the District's FL teachers as a whole, in addition to their perceptions of support they received as FL teachers. Additionally, the results of the self-reported surveys were useful for seeking relationships between teachers' sense of efficacy and their perceived support.

The Setting and Population

Setting

Castlewood Independent School District[2] is a major urban school district located in north Texas. The district employs approximately 5,000 teachers who instruct nearly 80,000 students. According to the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) published by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Castlewood ISD has been rating "Academically Acceptable" since 2005.

State reports of the district's demographics reveal that of its 80,000 students, 58.2% are Hispanic, 25.6% African American, 14.3% White, 1.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .3% Native American. An estimated 68.8% of the student population has been identified as economically disadvantaged, 62.4% "At-Risk," and 28.4% as limited English proficient (TEA, 2009-10).

Ethnicities of the district's 5,000 teachers include 60.7% White, 22.5% African American, 15.1% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian, and .3% Native American. Females represent 75.1% of the district's staff, with males comprising 24.9%. During the 2006-07 school year, roughly 9% of the district's professional staff were beginning teachers in their first year of teaching, and 31.4% had between one and five years of teaching experience (TEA, 2009-10).

Participants

My study focused on the World Languages program within Castlewood ISD during the 2009-10 school year. The District employed approximately 120 FL teachers

[2] All names used in this study—including those of the district, schools, and individual participants—are pseudonyms.

who taught at the 24 middle schools and 13 high schools within Castlewood ISD in the 2009-10 school year. The program was comprised of teachers of Spanish (N=75), French (N=22), Latin (N=9), German (N=4), Exploratory Languages (N=4), Japanese (N=2), American Sign Language (N=2), Chinese (N=1), and Italian (N=1). Of these 120 teachers, 46% had between 0-5 years of teaching experience, 60% were female and 40% male.

The administration of the surveys occurred during teacher in-service on August 19, 2009. All of the FL teachers in attendance were invited to participate in the survey. The decision to include all of the teachers in the survey was based on the variety of schools, languages taught, and experience represented by District's FL teachers. Recruitment of participants for the survey is discussed in greater detail in the "Procedures" section below.

Instrumentation

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

Since its publication in 2001, the TSES (Appendix A) has been widely used in large-scale assessments of teacher efficacy. The instrument is comprised of 3 subscales, including efficacy for student engagement, efficacy for instructional practices, and efficacy for classroom management. The TSES asks teachers to rate how much they think they can do in such areas as getting through to difficult students, controlling disruptive behavior, and responding to difficult questions; for example, "How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?" Respondents rate their confidence for these tasks on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "I can do

nothing" to 9 "I can do a great deal" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy conducted extensive testing of the reliability and validity of the instrument in studies with large numbers of pre-service and in-service teachers. Several series of factor analysis, as well as correlations with other teacher self-efficacy measures, concluded that the scores on the scales can be considered reasonably valid and reliable. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) reported reliability of the short form at $\alpha = .90$. In addition to having a high degree of validity and reliability, the TSES takes into account a wide range of teaching tasks.

Perceptions of Success Inventory (PSI)

The Perceptions of Success Inventory for Beginning Teachers (PSI, Corbell, et al., 2008) was created based on literature on professional support for beginning teachers. The instrument explores teachers' perceptions of Mentor Support (with internal reliability established by the authors at $\alpha = .87$), Classroom Climate ($\alpha = .84$), Commitment ($\alpha = .80$), Administrative Support ($\alpha = .81$), Colleague and Instructional Resource Support ($\alpha = .76$), and Assignment and Workload ($\alpha = .65$). Content validity for the instrument was established through extensive literature review as well as factor analysis (Corbell et al., 2008). The instrument uses as 6-point Likert scale, with values ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to gauge teachers' perceptions of support. The instrument's authors explained that their use of an even number of options was intentional, requiring teachers to indicate some level of agreement or disagreement, therefore eliminating any neutral responses.

I adapted the PSI slightly to fit the context of foreign language teaching by substituting "foreign language" for "teachers at my same subject level" in item 10 (Appendix B). Additionally, as this instrument was used with all FL teachers in Castlewood ISD, the term "teachers at my level of experience" was substituted for "novice teachers" in items 12 and 18. To further address the perceptions of support of teachers at varying levels of experience, three statements were added to the inventory, including item 2, "I have mentors or exemplary teachers *within my content area* to whom I look for support;" item 3, "At this point in my career, I have the support I need to be an effective teacher;" and item 44, "I have opportunities to engage in meaningful professional development." The changes I made to the existing PSI instrument were principally superficial, and did not significantly change the established survey protocols.

Procedures

I worked with the Program Director of World Languages for Castlewood ISD to find the most suitable time for administering the surveys to the District's FL teachers. I chose to administer the surveys during the Department's first in-service day as attendance was compulsory for the District's teachers. This gave me the greatest access to the full range of FL teachers within the District.

The survey was administered in person during the afternoon session of the first in-service meeting. Upon returning from their lunch break, teachers were required to check in for the afternoon session. Each teacher was given the survey packet at the sign-in table. The survey packet included five main elements:

1. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, the voluntary nature of participation, and how to contact the principal investigator (Appendix C).
2. A recruitment letter for participation in the case study portion of the survey (Appendix D).
3. A demographic questionnaire about each teacher and his/her certification, experience, and current teaching assignment (Appendix E).
4. The short form of the TSES instrument (Appendix A).
5. The PSI instrument (Appendix B).

After the teachers were welcomed back to the afternoon session by the Program Director, I spoke to the group about the survey, the purpose of my study, and instructions for completing the survey packet. I emphasized that completion of the survey packet was completely voluntary and would not impact participants' relationship with Castlewood ISD or The University of Texas at Austin. Participation in the survey was anonymous, although participants could optionally include their contact information, should they be interested in taking part of the case study research. I stated that participants could decline to answer any question or choose to withdraw from participation at any time. Teacher-participants were encouraged to contact me if they had any questions about my study, the surveys, or their role. I noted that the study and surveys had been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Texas (approval #2009-04-0031).

Participants indicated their consent to participate by filling out and turning in the survey. Completed surveys were returned to a box at the sign-in table throughout the afternoon session. At the conclusion of the day's session, I reminded the group of

teachers to return any completed surveys if they were interested in participating in the survey research. From the group of teachers gathered that afternoon 47 returned surveys, bringing the response rate to approximately 40%. Of the surveys returned, two were incomplete and were thus eliminated from the analysis of the data.

Data analysis

First, the data generated by the pencil-and-paper surveys were entered manually into Excel. Data were later transformed and uploaded into the statistical software package SPSS for Windows, which was used for all data analysis.

Statistical procedures employed included descriptive statistics for the demographic data obtained from the survey, including participants' sex, native language, terminal degree, certification type, prior teaching experience, and teaching assignment at the time of the survey. Descriptive statistics were also computed to examine overall tendencies on the TSES and PSI (percentages, means, and standard deviations). Correlational analysis sought to identify any potential relationships between teachers' self-reported teaching efficacy and perceptions of support. Additionally, regression analysis was conducted in order to determine which of the independent variables (including demographics and perceived support) were the best predictors of teachers' efficacy. The results of the regression analysis were used to identify factors which were most influential on FL teachers' efficacy beliefs (research question 1). Correlational data was used to measure the potential relationship between FL teachers' efficacy beliefs and perceptions of professional support (research question 2). Results of the quantitative component of the study are included in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

QUALITATIVE APPROACH: CASE STUDY DESIGN

Case Study Design

In order to explore the types of content-specific professional support available to beginning FL teachers and the potential impact of such support on their perceptions of teaching efficacy, I also used the qualitative case study method. Yin defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (2003, p. 13). Merriam (1998) adds that case study methodology "results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon," and that its strengths make it a "particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education. (41)"

Case study is differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that it occurs within a bounded system (Merriam, 1998) and focuses on "…a specific, a complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995; p. 2). In my study, the bounded system was the World Languages department of Castlewood ISD. The program director and four beginning teachers working within that program were subcases, whose stories contributed to the knowledge of what the district does to support its FL teachers. Furthermore, by learning the stories of the beginning FL teachers in this study, I was better able to understand their perceptions of teaching efficacy and the interplay of efficacy with teachers' perceptions of support that were found in the quantitative data.

Participants

Program Director

One of the principal participants in the study was Mary Goodwin, Program Director for World Languages of Castlewood ISD[3]. At the time of the study, Mary Goodwin had served as the District's program director for 10 years. Prior to obtaining this position, Mary taught French and Spanish within the District for 25 years. Mary's experiences as a classroom teacher had great bearing on her actions and worldview as an administrator. I purposefully selected Mary for this study based on her position and career-long experience working within the District. Her competence and intimate knowledge of the World Languages program made her an ideal participant from whom to collect information about Castlewood ISD's efforts to provide professional support for beginning FL teachers.

In addition to the level of expertise Mary offered for research on content-specific support, she and I have maintained a professional relationship since 2001. Between August 2001 and May 2005, I worked as a Spanish teacher for Castlewood ISD under the direction of Mary Goodwin. My professional history with Mary enabled me to probe and question from a place of rapport and trust. Furthermore, as we had pre-established mutual professional respect, Mary was willing to make her program, materials, and connections accessible to me for the purposes of this study. I collected interview and document data from Mary—in person, via telephone, and through e-mail correspondence—between July 2009 and June 2010.

[3] In order to maintain participant confidentiality, all names used in this study—including those of the district, schools, and individual participants—are pseudonyms.

Novice Teachers

I also sought the participation of FL teachers with three or fewer years of classroom teaching experience for this study. I obtained contact information from the teachers by means of a recruitment letter (Appendix D). This letter was attached to the survey packet distributed during the in-service meeting for World Language teachers. I e-mailed all of the teachers who responded to the recruitment letter. Of the 13 novice teachers who had initially shown interest in participating, 4 ultimately were available and willing to participate in the case studies.

When planning my research, I intended to purposefully select participants to ensure equitable representation of males and females, native and non-native speakers of the language taught, certification type, and grade level taught. The four teachers who participated in this study included two women and two men. Of the four participants, two were native speakers of the language they taught, one was a heritage speaker, and one a non-native speaker. Three taught at the middle school level, and one taught high school. Interestingly, all of the participants obtained their teaching licensure through alternative certification programs. This detail proved influential in the analysis and interpretation of the data as well as in the themes which emerged from this study.

Each of the case study participants received a participant consent letter (Appendix F), prior to participating in any interviews or observations. Participants were notified that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities, and that their participation in the case studies would not be made known to other participants, including Mary Goodwin, Castlewood's World Languages Program Director. Participants were advised that they

could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary.

Participants were also asked to give consent for interviews to be audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder. They were informed that all audio recordings would be used only for research purposes by the primary investigator. I e-mailed transcripts of the interviews to each of the respective participants, in order to ensure that they had opportunities to confirm that their actions and words were reflected accurately and appropriately. Each of the participants signed and dated a Statement of Consent to participate in the case studies as to have their interviews recorded. Furthermore, I again asked each participant's permission to audio-record our conversation at the beginning of each interview session.

Ernesto Lima. Ernesto began his first year of teaching in the 2009-10 school year. Ernesto came to teaching as a second career, after retiring early from "the business sector." In our first interview, Ernesto told me, "I had always said that when I had the opportunity, I would teach." Early retirement (at age 40) provided Ernesto the opportunity he needed. Through teaching, he hoped to, "bring what [he] had learned to some people who [he] thought would appreciate it."

Ernesto was born in New York and raised in Puerto Rico. He considers Spanish his first language, and also speaks English and Italian. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Political Science, and went through an alternative teacher certification program prior to his employment with Castlewood ISD.

Carlos Peralta. Carlos was also a first-year teacher during the time of this study. Before becoming a classroom teacher, 26-year-old Carlos worked in the real estate industry. Although he had some prior experience working with students through an after-school art program, Carlos credited the downturn in the economy as a motivator for entering the teaching profession full-time. During our first meeting he explained, "I've been told by friends and family that I would be a really good teacher. So, even though I've done other things, that's always been in the back of my head… and with the recession, it just gave me the opportunity to have the time to do it."

Carlos was born in South America and moved to the United States as a teenager. Spanish was his native language; he also spoke English very proficiently and had some familiarity with French. Carlos held a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Sculpture. He was involved in an alternative teacher certification program—through which he would also obtain a Master's degree—during the time of this study.

Amanda Martinez. Amanda, 34, was in her third year of teaching with Castlewood ISD in the 2009-10 school year. "I always knew I wanted to teach, I just didn't know *what* I wanted to teach," Amanda explained in our first interview. Amanda grew up within thirty miles of Castlewood. Her parents both spoke Spanish, but she recounted that when she was a child they stopped, "…because my dad didn't want us growing up with an accent. And so we just spoke English for a long time."

Amanda earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish, and went on to obtain her Master of Arts in Modern Languages. While pursuing her Master's degree, Amanda worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in university-level Spanish classes. She also

had experience as a tutor and substitute teacher prior to her employment with Castlewood ISD. She obtained her teaching credential through an alternative certification program.

Lucy Andrews. Of the four case study participants, Lucy (age 29) had been with Castlewood ISD the longest. The 2009-10 school year marked her fourth year teaching for the District. Unlike the other participants in the study, Lucy told me that before entering the classroom, "I never wanted to teach!"

Lucy grew up in a small town approximately 50 miles from Castlewood. English was her first language and she learned French in college and through study abroad in France. After earning a Bachelor of Arts in French, taking some graduate courses, and volunteering with AmeriCorps for a year, Lucy received a call from Mary Goodwin about a position teaching French with the District, which she accepted. Lucy received her teaching credential through an on-line alternative certification program.

Data Collection Procedures

In case study research, the use of multiple data sources is required in order to provide a comprehensive perspective (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). As Merriam advocates, "Understanding the case in its totality, as well as the intensive, *holistic* description and analysis characteristic of a case study, mandates both breadth and depth of data collection" (1998, p. 134, emphasis in original). Furthermore, the corroborative use of multiple sources of data allows the researcher to cross-check and validate findings (Merriam, 1998). Triangulation of data can thus be established through what Yin calls "converging lines of inquiry" (2003).

Qualitative data collection, comprised primarily of semi-structured interviews as well as observations, took place on location in participants' classrooms in Castlewood ISD during the fall semester of the 2009-2010 school year. Details about the nature of each data source, as well as a rationale for inclusion in the study, are outlined below.

Interviews

Interview data comprised a great deal of the data collection within the present study. I chose to use semi-structured interviews throughout the majority of this inquiry. The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe for clarification and follow participants' unique experiences and insights. The structured format ensured that I sought similar information from each of the beginning teacher participants, while also facilitating cross-case analysis.

Program director. As Mary Goodwin was the person most familiar with content-specific support provided for beginning FL teachers on the District level and was responsible for planning professional development for the District's World Language teachers, I began the data collection process by interviewing her. During the 2009-10 school year, I was able to formally interview Mary on three separate occasions. Our first interview was the most structured (see Appendix G for interview protocol), and took place in her office on July 30, 2009. I audio recorded and transcribed this interview, which lasted approximately 90 minutes. During this interview, Mary explained her role as program director of World Languages for Castlewood ISD and what responsibilities her position entailed. She talked to me about the types of content-specific support that were available for the District's new FL teachers and discussed how support needs vary

for beginning teachers as opposed to teachers with more experience. Mary also described how she typically plans in-service meetings and other professional development opportunities for the FL teachers in her department, as well as her concerns regarding changes to the District's professional development, which were put into effect in the 2009-10 school year. This interview also provided an opportunity for me to coordinate the scheduling of the survey administration for the District's FL teachers with Mary.

Mary and I met again in early December at a breakfast meeting. During our conversation, I asked Mary how she felt that the District's new mandates for professional development were impacting her and the District's FL teachers [these are discussed in greater detail in following sections]. We also discussed how support needs vary for FL teachers not only based on their prior experience, but also on their teaching assignment—specifically those who teach FL at high school settings versus those who teach at the middle school level.

My last interview with Mary was a phone interview on July 2, 2010. This final interview was the least structured, as I originally called to ask some clarifying questions about professional development sessions for new teachers that Mary had held throughout the prior school year. In addition to discussing this topic, Mary talked some about the challenges she was facing at the time with hiring FL teachers for the upcoming school year. I used this opportunity to follow-up on which of the teachers who were new to the District in 2009-10 were staying on with Castlewood and what factors influenced those decisions. We also discussed differences in the professional development needs of traditional and alternatively certified teachers. Though I was unable to record this

interview, I took detailed notes throughout our conversation which I used for data analysis.

Novice teachers. I conducted two face-to-face interviews with each of the FL teacher participants during the fall semester (see Appendix H for novice teacher interview protocols). With participants' consent, I audio-recorded the interviews, each of which lasted between 45-60 minutes. I also transcribed each of the interviews and presented them to participants for member checking. For the most part, interviews with teachers were held in their classrooms during their planning period or after school. However, in one instance, I conducted an interview with a participant during his lunch break, which included a car ride to a nearby fast food restaurant.

I conducted the first interviews in October 2009. I chose to wait until after the first six weeks of school in order to respect the participants' busy schedules and demands associated with the beginning of a new school year. When recruiting teachers for inclusion in the study, I had initially asked them to write a short professional autobiography regarding their motivation, training and experience within the FL teaching field. As none of the participants responded to this request, I used the first interviews as an opportunity to get to know the participants, as well as their histories as beginning professionals working within Castlewood ISD. The interviews thus focused on teachers' certification and training, motivation to become FL teachers, and experiences working for Castlewood ISD up to the time of the interview. I also asked the teacher participants about their successes and challenges in the classroom, what factors had influenced their

confidence for the teaching task, and how they viewed FL teaching in comparison with teaching other content areas.

The second interviews took place in December, shortly before the winter break. During the second interviews, teachers described the professional support they had received while teaching for Castlewood ISD, at the school-level as well as the District-level. On the topic of professional support, I asked teachers about content-specific support for FL, opportunities for developing their language proficiency, and how they felt support for FL teachers compared with support for teachers of other subject areas. Teachers also described their utopian vision of professional support for beginning FL teachers, and discussed how long they saw themselves within the teaching profession.

During the second round of interviews, I used the TSES survey that the teachers had completed prior to the beginning of the school year to enquire into their perceptions of teaching efficacy and any changes therein. As the case study participants had provided their contact information on their surveys, I was able to ask participants to compare their responses, as reported prior to the beginning of the school year, with those they felt after having a semester in the classroom. For those who were in their first year of teaching, I asked them to re-assess their perceptions of efficacy after having a semester in the classroom. For the participants who had taught for more than one year, I asked them to imagine how they would have responded to the TSES in their very first year of teaching. During this activity, the more experienced teachers also remarked on how their perceptions of efficacy had changed since they became teachers and what factors had brought about such changes.

Observations

Observations are frequently used in qualitative research, as they allow the researcher firsthand experience with the phenomena under investigation within the natural setting (Merriam, 1998). The use of observation leads to a better understanding of the context and can be of great use to the researcher in triangulating emerging findings. In order to more fully experience the types of content-specific professional support available for beginning FL teachers at Castlewood ISD, I attended the New Teacher In-Service as a participant observer. I also observed at the in-service held for the District's World Language department as a whole. Furthermore, I scheduled observations of each of the four FL teacher-participants' classes.

As part of the district's induction program, content-specific in-service days were held for the District's new teachers on August 10-12, 2009. During my observations, I took field notes on the content of the in-service sessions, as well as notes about the District's new FL teachers. Although it was not my original intent, my presence at the New Teacher In-Service became a recruiting tool—after explaining the general purpose of my study, one of the new teachers approached me about participating in the case study component of my data collection.

To get an idea of professional development offerings available for FL teachers at all levels of experience, I also observed during in-service for Castlewood ISD's World Languages department on August 19, 2009. Given my personal history working for the District, I made comparisons about how the professional development was different, noting in particular the changes as mandated by the District that were initiated in 2009. My presence at the in-service meeting allowed me opportunities to visit with teachers

with a wide range of experience and backgrounds, to reconnect with former colleagues, and to see the fruits of Mary Goodwin's planning and preparation.

In addition to observing during the District-wide professional development days, I observed each of the teacher participants involved in this study. For the sake of convenience, I coordinated my observations with my interview schedule—each time that I had an interview with the participants, I arranged to observe one of their classes, either before or after our interview session. I scheduled the interviews and observations with participants via e-mail, approximately one to two weeks prior. I sent a reminder e-mail to each of the participants the day before I visited their classrooms.

During my observations, I did not give any feedback on the lessons I observed, and was not asked for feedback by any of the participants. The classroom observations helped me to see how the participants interacted with their students and how their efficacy beliefs manifested themselves in practice. However, as teaching self-efficacy beliefs are based on individuals' perceptions, rather than reality, I relied more on data from interviews and self-report documents than classroom observations in my analysis.

Field notes. During my observations, I took field notes on my netbook computer. Field notes from the professional development meetings included short scripts of what Mary Goodwin and other speakers said during presentations, comments about the involvement of the teachers during these meeting, and schedules of activities as they occurred. My field notes during classroom visits included scripts of what the teachers said during instruction, general observations about classroom arrangement and displays,

instructional and managerial procedures I witnessed, beginning and ending times for activities, and other notes related to the day's events and interactions.

Documents

I collected documentary data pertaining to professional support of FL teachers as I worked with Mary Goodwin and the FL teacher participants. The majority of the documents I collected came from Mary Goodwin. She gave me copies of the agendas for professional development meetings as she had planned them, in addition to the sequence of professional development objectives mandated by Castlewood ISD for the 2009-10 school year (Appendix I).

I also collected relevant documents while attending the New Teacher In-service on August 10th through 12th and the in-service meeting for FL teachers on August 19th. At both meetings, I obtained a copy of the respective packets distributed to the teachers present. These packets included information such as a list of resources available to FL teachers through Mary's office, pertinent articles on FL teaching, and ideas for the design of classroom activities. These documents were useful in triangulating data regarding content-specific professional support and the District's modifications to how that support was provided during the time of this inquiry.

Data Analysis

Merriam (1998) emphasizes the need for qualitative data analysis to occur in conjunction with data collection; "…even while collecting data, the researcher is already beginning to analyze it" (p. 139). The process of analyzing data is ongoing and requires

continual reflection (Creswell, 2003). My search to make meaning of the data began concurrently with the collection of that information.

When conducting formal analysis, I did my best to heed the suggestions of Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2003) by preparing transcripts soon after data collection, reading through to get a general sense of the information, and making notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins. In order to manage my data, I kept a research binder with tabs for each participant, under which I kept hard copies of transcripts, field notes, and related documents. Furthermore, I printed copies of the transcripts, field notes, and analytic memos—each of which was color-coded by participant—which I used in a cut-and-paste approach to analysis. I cut sections from each piece of data and grouped those that seemed to go together on a sticky display board pinned to the wall of my home office (Figure 3.1).

I progressed through the data related to each of the particular cases in the same manner. Through grouping on the display board, I created a web of connected patterns and themes. This hands-on approach to data analysis gave me a concrete visualization of the data; I was able to see key linkages and general patterns within each of the cases, as well as arrive at comparisons and contrasts between them. As I worked with data on the display board, I created posters for each of the themes and conceptual explanations as they emerged.

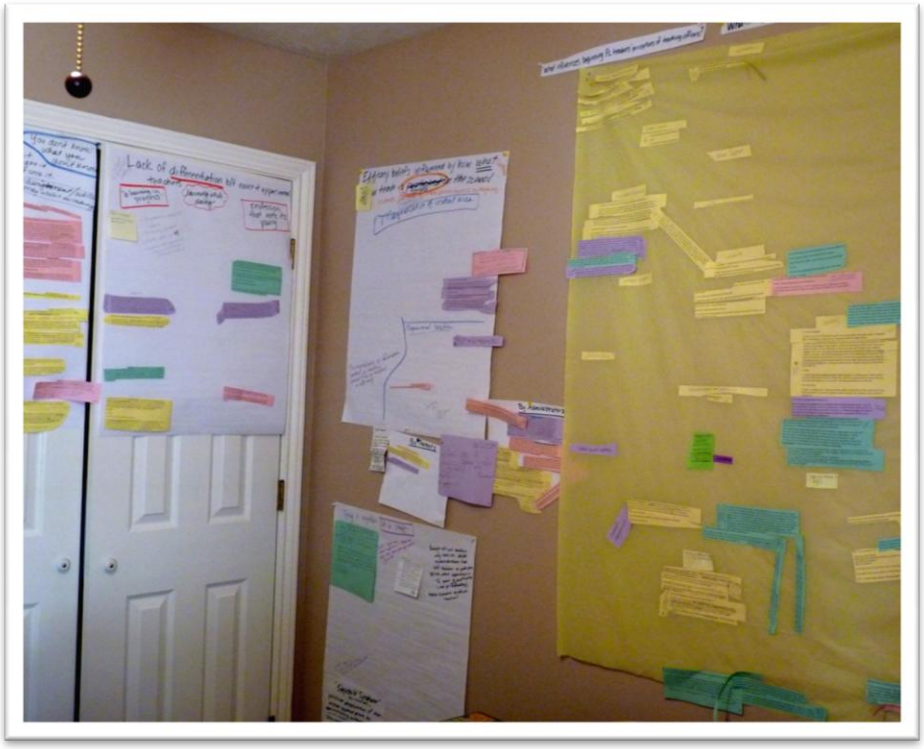

Figure 3.1: Qualitative Analysis in Action

Throughout this ongoing process, I was truly surrounded by my data. Although it took an enormous amount of time, being able to physically manipulate the data enabled me to group and re-group the information as needed, to add memos and reflections as they occurred to me, and reassess my conclusions as I worked.

Meeting the Criteria for Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, it is important to take measures for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of findings, particularly in applied fields such as education (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Efforts to establish the trustworthiness of my conclusions were made by the incorporation of triangulation through multiple data sources, member checking, peer debriefing, and researcher reflexivity to avoid bias.

Additionally, the use of thick description (Merriam, 1998) was incorporated in order to support my findings with substantive evidence from the data sources.

Triangulation within the present study was accommodated through the incorporation of multiple methods of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). By including several approaches within this single study, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, I was able to "build a coherent justification for the themes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196) which emerged. The inclusion of various measures for data collection provided opportunities to seek and justify themes, ensuring corroboration of the data, and hence, greater triangulation.

Additionally, my study incorporated member checking as a means of cooperation between the researcher and participants to assure accuracy of reports. Member checking requests that the participants examine writings in which their actions or words are featured, be they drafts, specific descriptions, themes, or the final product (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995). Assuring that the actors feel that the passages are accurate and palatable establishes trustworthiness within the work. I incorporated member checks into my research by providing participants with transcripts of recorded interviews, inviting them to review, comment, and clarify any statements. Furthermore, I used subsequent interviews to return to participants' statements from prior meetings which required additional clarification. Participant responses were used to correct misrepresentations in the data and strengthen the credibility of results.

In addition to incorporating member checking as a process for establishing trustworthiness, I also depended on the assistance and critiques of my colleagues as I

undertook data collection and analysis. Peer debriefing, involving "…locating a person who reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196), was ongoing throughout my data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A colleague in language education made her time and resources available to me, helping me to debrief throughout the various stages of this study.

Creswell (2003) and Merriam (1998) express the imperative for the researcher to openly discuss and clarify any bias that she may bring to the study at the outset of the study as well as within the written report. In addition, it is essential that the researcher practice reflexivity in examining bias during data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Throughout the duration of my study, I held myself to a standard of being as non-biased, accurate, and honest as possible throughout my interactions with participants, as well as in my writings. However, my personal history as a FL teacher inevitably filtered what I did and did not notice within each of the cases. This will be discussed in greater detail in the Researcher Positionality section below.

Finally, to enhance the trustworthiness of my results within the written narrative, I aimed to incorporate rich, thick description. Merriam asserts that the inclusion of thick description assists readers in determining how closely their situations match that of the research context, thus influencing their perceptions on the transferability of conclusions (1998). Through the use of descriptive evidence, such as quotations from the data sources, it has been my intent to portray the case in enough compelling detail to support my findings and interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

In any type of research, the ethical treatment of participants, research sites, and data is a major concern. Qualitative research is distinctive in that "…producing a study that has been conducted and disseminated in an ethical manner lies with the individual investigator" (Merriam, 1998, p. 219). It is thus imperative that the researcher anticipate ethical issues which permeate the research process and avoid situations that would compromise her integrity or that of her work. Outlined in the following paragraphs are the measures I used for maintaining confidentiality of participants, a statement of my positionality within the study, and an acknowledgement of limitations of this study.

Maintaining confidentiality of participants

Researchers have an ethical responsibility to protect and maintain confidentiality of all participants within a given study. This study inquired into personal perceptions of teaching efficacy, a potentially sensitive topic of discussion with participants. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research and details of data collection (i.e., digitally recorded interviews, note taking) prior to any data gathering. Furthermore, participants were reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation in the study and their right to withdraw at any time. The inclusion of member checking also ensured that participants' actions and words were reflected as accurately and appropriately as possible.

In order to protect the identities of all those involved in the study, pseudonyms were used for names of participants, schools, and the district. Although I was working with Mary Goodwin, the FL program director of Castlewood ISD, I was deliberate to protect the identities of the beginning teacher participants. She never pressed me for

information regarding the teachers I was working with, nor the campuses I visited. I felt it imperative to keep the identities of teacher participants confidential in order to avoid any conflicts of interest, and to maintain an atmosphere where teacher participants felt free to discuss their points of view. Consent for participation within this study was obtained in accordance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies.

Researcher positionality

As a former Spanish teacher employed by Castlewood ISD, I set about this study with both emic and etic interests. Between 2001 and 2005, I was employed at a middle school within Castlewood ISD, where I taught 7th and 8th grade Spanish. Though at that point in time I was not familiar with the term "efficacy" or its implications for teaching, upon reflection I see the impact it made on my work as a foreign language teacher. The interplay of support and efficacy that I experienced during my years at Castlewood continues to interest me, as I consider it now from the role of researcher.

In fact, my choice to leave full-time teaching to pursue graduate studies was greatly influenced by factors of efficacy and content-specific support. For years, when explaining my decision to leave the classroom I have asserted that, "Within my classroom, things were fine." However, a perceived lack of school-level administrative support specific to my content area motivated my decision to leave the classroom. This perceived lack of support was evidenced through regular meetings with the school's principal, during which I was encouraged to inflate students' grades in Spanish so that they would "feel better about themselves for the TAKS test," as well as a lack of

supervisory feedback on my strengths and areas for development specific to my role as a FL teacher.

I began graduate studies in FL education in order to strengthen my familiarity with FL teaching. Through the course of my studies, my interest in teacher development has escalated as a result of working with pre-service FL teachers as well as reflecting on my own experiences in the profession. Through my interactions with pre-service teachers as they transition to full-time professionals, I have come to recognize the importance of efficacy as well as appropriate support for beginning FL teachers.

The decision to conduct a case study of Castlewood ISD's World Language program, while deliberate, was not without issues. My role as participant-observer in this study, considering my personal history within the district, might have given rise to potential biases (Yin, 2003). My preconceived ideas about what support and efficacy look like in a beginning FL teacher's classroom filtered what I did and did not notice about each of the cases. It is imperative that I acknowledge the biases I brought to the study, knowing that my personal experiences within the district were not necessarily typical of all beginning teachers employed therein. Furthermore, as I have maintained a professional relationship with Mary Goodwin since my employment there, it was essential that my role as researcher was distinguished from my role as colleague at the onset of the study.

Limitations

One of the principal limitations of this study was the physical distance between the location of the study and my place of residence. Castlewood, Texas is approximately

a three hour drive from where I live; under some circumstances, it was difficult to be "…at the right place at the right time, either to participate in or to observe important events" (Yin, 2003, p. 96). The restraint of the physical locations of the study also played a role in scheduling, as teacher-participants worked at four different campuses throughout the District.

Conducting data collection at several different campuses implied that contextual factors specific to each school made an impact on the findings of the study. I expected to see beginning teachers' perceptions of efficacy and support influenced by the specific school(s) in which they work. This notion of context-specific factors was ever present in the analysis of my data, and became one of the emergent themes of this study.

Ultimately, as the primary instrument of data collection, I brought experiential, cultural, and personal biases to the research process. Though I did strive to be aware of these biases, the study was nevertheless filtered through my experience and worldview from start to finish. I acknowledge that my personal biases and limitations may have been a factor in this study and take responsibility for all that was inadvertently omitted and overlooked throughout the research process and final report.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the sense of teaching efficacy and perceptions of support of foreign language (FL) teachers in a large urban school district in north Texas. This chapter describes the data analyses and results of the surveys administered to the FL of Castlewood ISD teachers prior to the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. The first research question addressed whether a relationship existed between FL teachers' sense of efficacy and their perceptions of support. The second considered which factors were the best predictors of teaching efficacy. Descriptive statistics are presented first to facilitate interpretations of the findings from the subsequent correlational and regression analyses.

The analyses drew upon demographic data and teachers' responses to survey items assessing their teaching efficacy and perceptions of success in the FL classroom. Teachers' perceptions of efficacy were measured by the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Perceptions of support were measured using the Perceptions of Success Inventory for Beginning Teachers (PSI) (Corbell et al., 2008), which was adapted for use with FL teachers with various levels of experience (as discussed in Chapter 3).

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This section describes the demographics for the 45 survey respondents and presents information about their educational backgrounds, certification type, teaching experience, and teaching placements during the time of the study.

Demographics

In this sample of survey respondents (*n*= 45), 15 were male and 30 female. The mean age of the respondents was 40.4 years, with a standard deviation of 11.78. Twenty-six survey respondents identified English as their native language. Fourteen identified their native language as Spanish. Two had other languages as their native language (French and Italian, respectively), and three identified themselves as having dual native languages (English and either Spanish or French; see Figure).

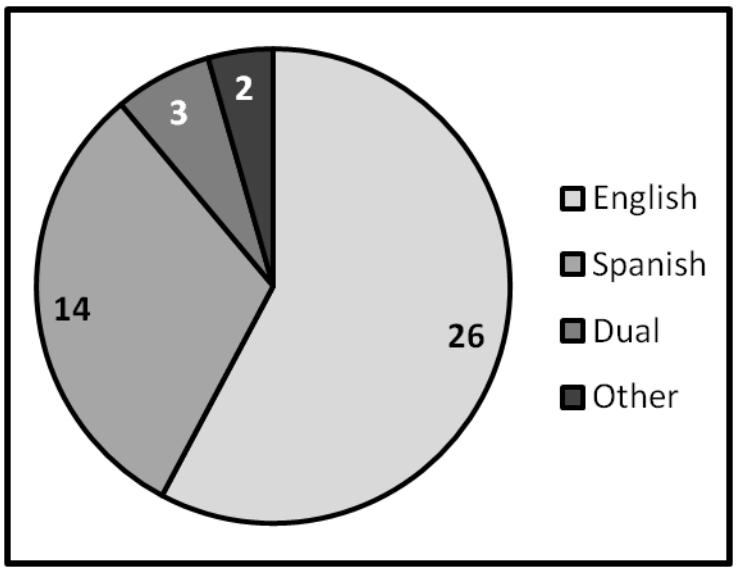

Figure 4.1: Teachers' Native Languages

Respondents' educational level and certification type

Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 present summary statistics for teachers' educational attainments and types of certification. Survey results showed that 55.6% of the teacher respondents had a Bachelor's degree and 44.4% held Master's degrees. Furthermore, of the 45 teachers who responded to the survey, 29 obtained their teaching certification

through traditional university-based programs, 12 were certified through alternative certification programs, and 4 did not report their means of obtaining teacher certification.

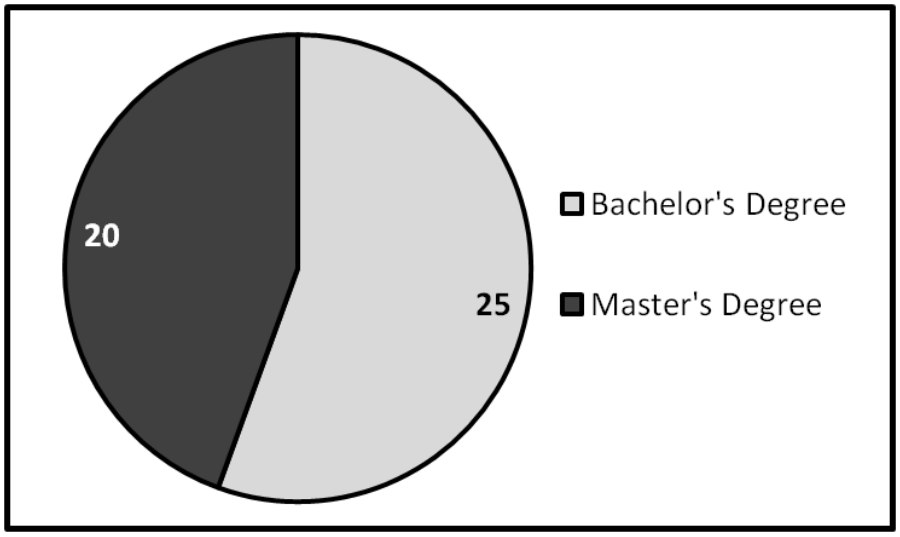

Figure 4.2: Highest Degree Earned

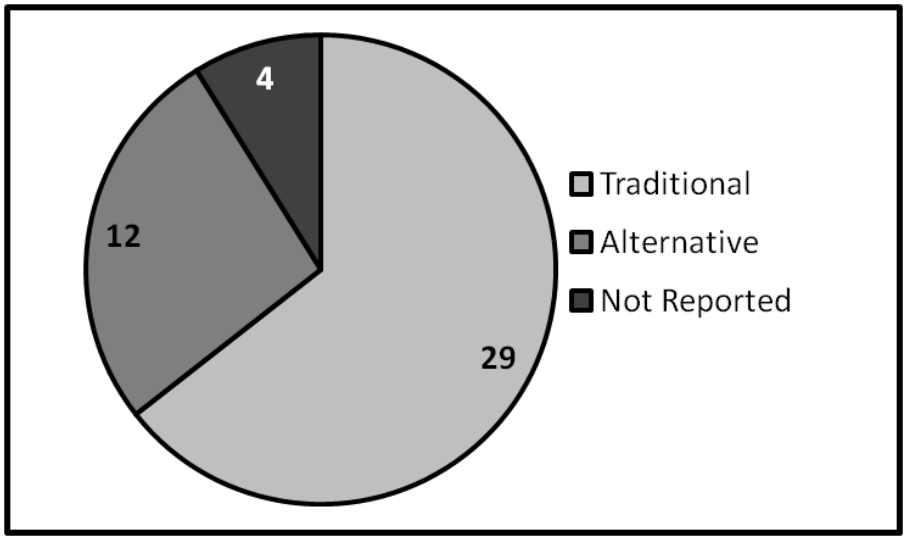

Figure 4.3: Teachers' Certification Type

Respondents' teaching experience and teaching assignment

Table 4.1 summarizes statistics pertaining to the experience and teaching assignments of the survey respondents. The teachers surveyed ranged from absolute

beginners with zero prior years of teaching experience to career teachers with 37 years of prior experience. Respondents had a mean 10.4 years of prior teaching experience. I created groups based on teachers' prior years of teaching experience in order to interpret data. I labeled those who were beginning their 1st-3rd years of teaching "Novice" teachers and those beginning their 4th-6th years "Experienced." Teachers in their 7th-19th years were classified as "Veteran" and those beginning their 20th year and greater I considered "Career" teachers.

Table 4.1: Teachers' Experience

	N	%	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Prior Years Teaching	45	100.0%	0	37	10.4	10.154
Novice	9	20.0%	0	2	n/a	n/a
Experienced	12	26.7%	3	5	n/a	n/a
Veteran	14	31.1%	6	17	n/a	n/a
Career	10	22.2%	19	37	n/a	n/a

The majority of respondents taught World Languages at the High School level (73.3%) which included grades 9-12. The remaining teachers were at the Middle School level (26.7%), teaching students in grades 6-8 (Figure 4.4). Not surprisingly, most of the FL teachers who participated in the survey were Spanish teachers, though a considerable number of French teachers also responded. A small number of respondents reported teaching two or more languages (in all cases, one of the languages was either Spanish or French), and two reported teaching a language other than Spanish or French (i.e. German

and Japanese; Figure 4.5).

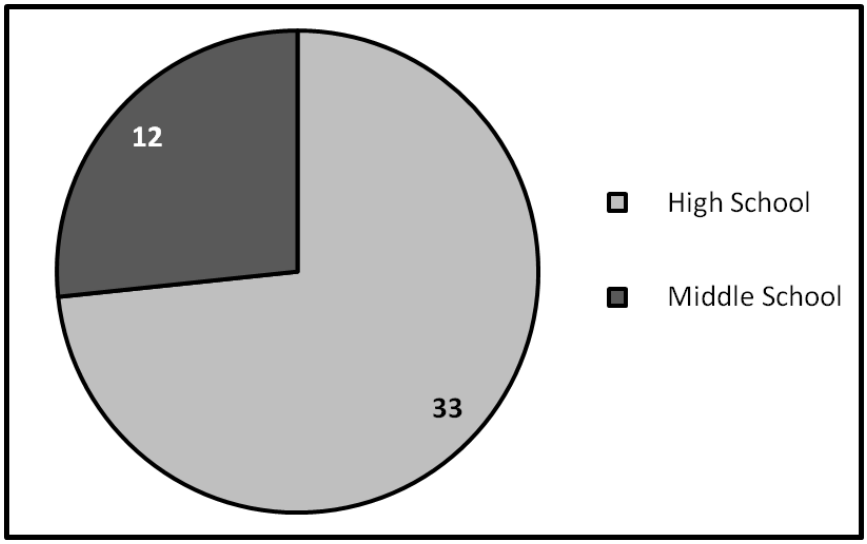

Figure 4.4: Grade Level Taught

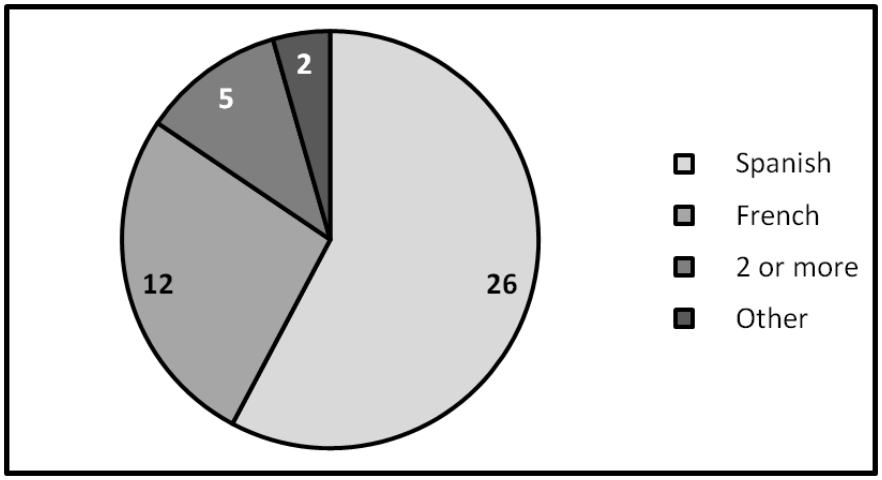

Figure 4.5: Language(s) Taught

FL Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs

I analyzed teachers' sense of efficacy, as reported on the TSES, according to demographic variables in order to determine if these factors demonstrated differences in teachers' perceptions of efficacy. The demographic data included information on teachers' sex, years of experience, native language, language(s) taught, certification type,

and highest degree attained. Table 4.2 presents means of teachers' perceptions of efficacy according to these demographic categories. Table 4.3 shows means of teachers' perceptions of efficacy split according to the three subscales of the TSES; efficacy for classroom management, efficacy for student engagement, and efficacy for instructional strategies.

Table 4.2: Teachers' Demographics and Perceptions of Efficacy

		N	Efficacy Score			
			Mean	SD	Min	Max
Sex	M	15	7.77	0.73	6.25	9.00
	F	30	7.35	0.66	5.92	9.00
Experience	Novice	9	7.39	0.89	5.92	8.67
	Experienced	12	7.72	0.54	7.17	9.00
	Veteran	14	7.21	0.74	6.25	8.58
	Career	10	7.68	0.59	7.17	9.00
Native Language	English	26	7.35	0.73	5.92	9.00
	Spanish	14	7.71	0.57	6.33	8.67
	Other	2	8.04	0.77	7.50	8.58
	Dual	3	7.25	1.00	6.25	8.25
Language Taught	Spanish	26	7.52	0.69	6.25	9.00
	French	12	7.37	0.67	5.92	8.50
	2 or more	5	7.78	0.96	6.75	9.00
	Other	2	7.04	0.53	6.67	7.42
Certification Taught	Traditional	29	7.49	0.75	5.92	9.00
	Alternative	12	7.53	0.63	6.58	8.67
	Not reported	4	7.40	0.81	6.25	8.08
Level taught	HS	33	7.54	0.76	5.92	9.00
	MS	12	7.35	0.56	6.25	8.33
Degree	Bachelor's	25	7.39	0.76	5.92	9.00
	Master's	20	7.61	0.63	6.67	9.00
Total		45	7.49	1.30	5.92	9.00

Though some variation existed according to the demographic break down, teachers' self-reported perceptions of efficacy were generally high. Generally speaking, the FL teachers in this survey had a mean efficacy score of 7.49 (SD= 1.30), indicating that they felt that could do "quite a bit" regarding the situations about which the survey asked.

Table 4.3: Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy by Subscale

		N	Classroom Mgmt.		Student Engagement		Instructional Strategies	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sex	M	15	8.20	0.66	7.13	1.31	7.97	0.74
	F	30	7.66	0.75	6.87	1.16	7.53	0.95
Exp.	Novice	9	7.56	0.86	7.33	0.98	7.28	1.38
	Exp.	12	7.88	0.54	7.75	0.92	7.54	0.71
	Veteran	14	7.86	0.92	6.14	1.24	7.64	0.76
	Career	10	8.02	0.67	6.80	0.96	8.23	0.58
Native Lang.	English	26	7.77	0.83	6.61	1.17	7.68	1.02
	Spanish	14	7.86	0.70	7.45	1.01	7.84	0.56
	Other	2	8.50	0.35	8.25	0.35	7.38	1.59
	Dual	3	7.92	0.52	6.83	1.76	7.00	0.90
Lang. Taught	Spanish	26	7.73	0.73	7.01	1.26	7.83	0.71
	French	12	7.83	0.73	7.06	0.81	7.21	1.23
	2 or more	5	8.30	0.86	7.05	1.66	8.00	0.85
	Other	2	8.12	1.24	5.38	0.18	7.62	0.53
Cert Type	Traditional	29	7.84	0.83	6.91	1.28	7.72	0.92
	Alt	12	7.73	0.64	7.29	0.89	7.56	0.82
	Unknown	4	8.19	0.55	6.31	1.39	7.69	1.25
Level taught	HS	33	7.90	0.83	6.95	1.21	7.77	0.98
	MS	12	7.67	0.49	6.98	1.25	7.42	0.60
Degree	Bachelor's	25	7.77	0.78	6.83	1.22	7.58	1.00
	Master's	20	7.93	0.74	7.11	1.19	7.79	0.77
Total		45	7.84	1.00	6.96	1.53	7.67	1.15

Upon examination of the efficacy subscales, some differences in efficacy perceptions emerged between the members of varying demographic groups. Variations in efficacy perceptions for classroom management and respondents' sex, as well as student engagement, instructional strategies and respondents' level of experience will be discussed in further detail in the sections below.

CORRELATIONAL FINDINGS AND T-TEST RESULTS

Table 4.4 presents the correlation matrix for teachers' demographic variables, self-reported scores on the TSES and PSI, and subscales of the two instruments. The correlations provide preliminary analysis of the directionality and significance of the associations between variables that were later explored with regression analysis.

Among teacher demographic variables, a two-sample *t*-test indicated that teachers' years of experience were significantly related to their type of certification, $t(37) = -4.92$, $p<.001$; teachers with more experience tended to be those with traditional university-based certification. This could be because alternative programs for teacher certification have not been in existence as long as traditional forms of teacher certification. While teachers' experience did not demonstrate a significant relationship with their overall TSES scores, two of the subscales did indicate some level of connection. Correlations between teachers' years of experience and efficacy for student engagement were negatively related ($r= -.320$, $p<.05$), indicating that those with fewer years of experience perceived their abilities to motivate and engage students as higher than did those with more experience. Conversely, teachers' experience and efficacy for instructional strategies were positively related ($r= .338$, $p<.05$). Teachers with more

years of FL teaching experience felt more efficacious in areas such as assessment, giving alternative explanations, and questioning strategies than did those with less experience.

Another notable relationship between teachers' demographic variables and TSES subscale scores appeared in a *t*-test; teachers' sex and their efficacy for classroom management showed a significant relationship, $t(32) = 2.48$, $p=.02$. The male teachers who took part in this study rated their self-efficacy for classroom management higher than did the female participants. Male teachers also reported higher scores on the PSI subscale for satisfaction with their assignment and workload than female participants, $t(38) = 2.29$, $p = .03$.

Participants' teaching assignment (whether they taught at the high school or middle school level) showed a relationship with their perceived support in the subscales of administrative support and colleague/resource support. Though little variation existed in the self-efficacy reports of teachers at the two levels, level taught and administrative support were significantly related on a *t*-test, $t(41) = 3.20$, $p = .003$. Teachers at the middle school level reported greater perceptions of administrative support than their colleagues at the high school level. A similar trend was noted between teaching level and colleague/resource support, $t(26) = 2.72$, $p = .011$.

Table 4.4: Correlation *(r)* Between Efficacy Scores, Perceptions of Support, and Teachers' Experience *(N=45)*

	TSES	PSI	Experience	Classroom Management	Student Engagement	Instructional Strategies	Mentor Support	Classroom Climate	Commitment	Administrative Support	Colleague/Resource Support	Assignment & Workload
TSES	1.000											
PSI	0.423**	1.000										
Experience	0.029	-0.180	1.000									
Classroom Management	0.729**	0.156	0.185	1.000								
Student Engagement	0.762**	0.562**	-0.320*	0.292	1.000							
Instructional Strategies	0.718**	0.112	0.338*	0.480**	0.211	1.000						
Mentor Support	0.122	0.800**	-0.224	-0.075	0.384*	-0.173	1.000					
Classroom Climate	0.381**	0.508**	0.072	0.375*	0.334*	0.133	0.275	1.000				
Commitment	0.593**	0.326*	-0.087	0.412**	0.427**	0.477**	0.062	0.102	1.000			
Administrative Support	0.266	0.767**	-0.161	0.115	0.373*	0.032	0.436**	0.305*	0.220	1.000		
Colleague/Resource Support	0.237	0.850**	-0.169	-0.046	0.458**	-0.014	0.662**	0.314*	0.078	0.594**	1.000	
Assignment, Workload	0.587**	0.527**	-0.095	0.396**	0.404**	0.507**	0.140	0.348*	0.444**	0.370*	0.392**	1.000

Note: * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

Research question 1: What, if any, relationship exists between FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and teaching efficacy?

The correlational analysis described up to this point examined teachers' demographic information and its relationship to their perceived efficacy or perceptions of support as reported on the TSES and PSI, respectively. The following section addresses the relationship between support and efficacy.

Correlational analysis revealed that teachers' self-reported scores on the TSES and their perceptions of support, as measured on the PSI, were positively related (r= .423, p<.01). Considering the subscales of the PSI, statistically significant positive relationships were also identified between teachers' TSES scores and

1. Commitment (r= .593, p<.01)
2. Assignment/workload (r= .587, p<.01)
3. Classroom Climate (r= .381, p<.01)

This information indicates that teachers with higher levels of efficacy for teaching also reported higher levels of commitment to the profession. This trend was also seen in teachers' satisfaction with their assignment and workload, as well as with positive perceptions of the climate within their respective classrooms. Based on this information, I conducted regression analysis to determine which factors were the best predictors of teachers' perceptions of efficacy; this will be discussed in a subsequent sections.

Teachers' self-reported scores on the PSI also revealed a relationship with their efficacy on the student engagement subscale of the TSES (r= .562, p<.01). Indeed, the student engagement (SE) subscale was positively related with all of the subscales of the

PSI (SE & Mentor Support, r= .384, p<.05; SE & Classroom Climate, r= .334, p<.05; SE & Commitment, r= .427, p<.01; SE & Administrative Support, r= .373, p<.05; SE & Colleague/Resource Support, r= .458, p<.01; SE & Assignment/Workload, r= .404, p<.01).

Research Question 2: What factors best predict FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy?

The analyses described in this section addressed the second research question, examining which factors were the best predictors of FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy. I chose to use linear regression analysis in order to best explain which of the predictive variables, including FL teachers' experience and perceptions of support, accounted for the most variance in their reports of teaching efficacy.

Because the correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between FL teachers' overall TSES scores and those on the PSI instrument—in addition to the relationships between levels of experience with two of the TSES subscales (student engagement and instructional strategies)—I first ran a regression with the TSES average as the predicted variable and PSI average and teachers' total years teaching as predictor variables (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Linear Regression of PSI Average and Teachers' Experience

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	T	Sig.
(Constant)	4.408	0.927		4.757	0.000
PSI Average	0.622	0.190	0.454	3.272	0.002
Total Years Teaching	0.013	0.010	0.189	1.361	0.181

Note: Dependent Variable = TSES Average

A significant model emerged (F= 5.697, *p*=.006), though the relationship between the variables was not particularly high (R=.462, R^2=.213, adjusted R^2=.176). The predictor variables in this model jointly explained approximately 18% of the variance of FL teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy. According to the standardized regression coefficients, teachers' PSI average was a significant predictor of their efficacy scores (β=.454, *p*=.002), however their total years of teaching experience was not a predictor (β=.189, *p*=.181).

As teachers' mean scores on the PSI showed some significance in explaining their TSES scores, I ran regression analysis of the TSES with the six subscales of the PSI in order to gain a better understanding of the predictor variables of efficacy. Though three of the six subscales were not significant predictors of teachers' efficacy (mentor support, administrative support, and colleague/resource support), a significant model emerged from regression of the commitment, classroom climate, and assignment/workload subscales (F= 15.252, *p*=.000). The relationship between the variables was fairly high (R=.726, R^2=.527, adjusted R^2=.493), with the predictor variables explaining almost 50% of the variance in FL teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy. According to the

standardized regression coefficients (Table 4.6), the relative importance order of the predictor variables was commitment (β=.429, *p*=.001), assignment & workload (β=.318, *p*=.017), and classroom climate (β=.227, *p*=.055). This finding suggests that teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, in conjunction with their contentment with their teaching assignment and workload, may be significantly related to their perceptions of efficacy in the classroom. The three combined factors accounted for almost 50% of the variance in FL teachers' perceptions of efficacy. However, the direction of causality cannot be determined based on these correlations.

Table 4.6: Linear Regression of PSI Subscales

Linear Regression of PSI Subscales					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	β	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.368	0.975		1.403	0.168
Classroom Climate	0.332	0.168	0.227	1.974	0.055
Commitment	0.449	0.126	0.429	3.572	0.001
Assignment & Workload	0.407	0.163	0.318	2.493	0.017
Note: Dependent Variable = TSES Average					

CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF CONTENT AND HOW IT IS REGARDED IN AND BY THE SCHOOL

This mixed-methods study investigated the sense of teaching efficacy and perceptions of support of FL teachers in Castlewood ISD—a large urban school district in north Texas. This chapter and the two that follow address major themes which emerged from the analysis of the qualitative case study data. Qualitative data was comprised of semi-structured interviews, observations and field notes, and documents collected from Mary Goodwin, program director of World Languages for Castlewood ISD, and the four novice FL teacher participants.

Through interviews with the four teachers who participated in this study, I found that the relevance (or perceived irrelevance) of teaching FL was reflected in a number of ways in their respective schools and the District as a whole. During my interviews with teacher informants and Mary Goodwin, FL program director, the notion of the marginalization of FL as a content area—often as a result of high-stakes testing—emerged as a recurrent topic of discussion. Informants' perspectives on this marginalization were reflected in their statements regarding professional development opportunities for World Language teachers within the District, particularly in contrast with those available for teachers of other [tested] content areas. High-stakes testing influenced how participants perceived the role of FL instruction within their schools, particularly how FL was regarded by administrators and colleagues. Furthermore, the challenge of making the content area of FL relevant for students was also marked by the

constant influence of high-stakes testing. A combination of narration and participants voices will be use in exploring these topics.

THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH-STAKES TESTING

The influence of high-stakes testing on how content areas are regarded within schools was a notable theme throughout interviews with case study informants. The FL teachers who participated in this study saw some benefits of teaching a non-tested subject, including lower stress levels—perceived to be brought on by the pressures associated with the TAKS test and helping students to pass said test—and freedom from compulsory TAKS-oriented professional development on evenings and weekends. However, these teachers also made comments regarding their lack of familiarity with the TAKS test and how this, combined with their status as FL teachers, often marginalized them within their specific teaching contexts.

In our first interview, Lucy illustrated some challenges she had experienced as a teacher of a non-tested content area within an atmosphere highly focused on the TAKS test:

> We're out of the loop in FL, pretty much, because we're not tested and all that stuff. So I don't know all those words [jargon and acronyms related to the TAKS]. It's nice, but it's also like, "Uh, I don't know what you're talking about" (October 28, 2009).

While Lucy professed that not being tested is "nice," her comment on being "out of the loop" revealed a perception of marginalization resulting from teaching a non-tested content area. As high-stakes testing has become more pervasive throughout schools and districts, the very language used in discussing such tests has become specialized. As

Lucy pointed out, this language of standardized tests is often unfamiliar to teachers of non-tested content areas. In Lucy's case, this lack of familiarity has, at times, been a source of feelings of isolation and marginalization from other [tested] content areas.

Amanda made a similar statement concerning how her status as a teacher of a non-tested content area affected her perception of professional worth during a recent on-campus professional development day:

> All I do is administer [the TAKS], which, I know it's a big deal, but I can't—what do I do to support? Because I don't know what your tests look like… So I don't have any—I just kind of felt useless (December 9, 2009).

Amanda's involvement with the TAKS test was limited to its administration. Consequently, her lack of familiarity with the test itself, as well as with ways to help to support tested areas through her specific content area, instilled a perception of uselessness during professional development geared toward teachers of tested content areas.

THE DEVALUATION OF FL AS A CONTENT AREA BY ADMINISTRATORS

The marginalization of FL as a content area was also evidenced in how teachers perceived their content areas to be viewed by administrators and colleagues. In our second interview, Ernesto explained how testing and "teaming" at the middle school where he taught demonstrated administrators' and colleagues' views on FL teaching:

> The other content areas get a lot more support. Way more. They have planning periods, they have teaming periods… So anything that's TAKS or anything oriented they have everything. I feel like the stepchild. You take whatever's left and make the best of it… I am on what's called the "elective team." And it's a team, but it's not a team. The elective is music, Spanish, choir, anything that doesn't fit into anything else. And FL really doesn't fit into none of those. And I think the belief here is, "Yeah, [FL] is important, but not as important. So no, you don't get to." (December 9, 2009)

From Ernesto's point of view, the status of FL as a non-tested content area made it less valuable than other tested content areas to administrators and colleagues. This was evident in the school's scheduling for tested versus non-tested content areas (who have two periods for planning, as opposed to a single class period), as well as in opportunities that teachers of tested content areas have to work with colleagues as part of a "team." Ernesto also expressed feeling like a "stepchild," a term also used by Mary Goodwin throughout our interviews in describing the positioning of FL teachers. In Ernesto's estimation, the non-tested content areas—those which don't "fit" alongside tested areas—were the school's "stepchildren" who "take what's left and make the best of it." He perceived that administrators felt that FL and other content areas among the "elective team" were nominally important, however not as vital to the school as the tested areas, and thus undeserving of specific and focused support.

In our second interview, Amanda expressed a similar sentiment regarding the general positioning of FL teachers:

> Well, I think for us [FL teachers], we get so overlooked most of the time that we're just kind of seen as—we're still seen as the "elective" that doesn't matter, and that they can kind of use the teacher however, as an administrator [of the TAKS] or whatever (December 9, 2009).

Amanda's comment echoed the sentiment of Ernesto, of FL as a content area that "doesn't matter," "doesn't fit," and is thus "overlooked" by others within the school. Amanda further elaborated that because she is the only FL teacher on her campus, colleagues have at times questioned why she is present for school-level professional development that pertains only to the tested content areas (personal communication,

December 9, 2009). This reaction from her colleagues caused Amanda to wonder, "What is my place?"

In our first interview, Mary relayed an anecdote about losing a FL teacher to another content area as a result of administrative pressure within her school:

> I lost a teacher to math this year, because she decided that she was tired of being a nobody. But, I think that was part of the principal pressing her, because she is an excellent teacher and he needed her in the math area. So, I think that that was probably part of the deal, too. He moved her into the building, gave her a better room. So there are some perks to that, you know? (July 29, 2009)

In describing this teacher's situation as "tired of being a nobody," Mary once again used terminology indicating FL teachers' marginalization based on the content area they teach. Furthermore, Mary revealed differential treatment for teachers of tested content areas versus non-tested content areas by the administrator, in this particular case. By switching from teaching Spanish to teaching math, this teacher was given a better classroom inside of the building, instead of being in the portables.

This differential treatment for teachers of tested and non-tested content areas was not limited to one case, however. In the same interview, Mary elaborated on the physical positioning of FL teachers based on the content area they teach:

> At five of the high schools now, [FL teachers] have been put out into the portable buildings, because of the in-house 9th grade and 10th grade teams. And that's hard. That's a slap in the face. And a lot of the teachers have felt like that. They're kind of over it now, but when it first happened, it was very, very difficult. And I had to do a lot of hand-holding and "Buck up, Buckeroo! Because there's nothing we can do about it." That's part of my job, it to make [FL teachers] feel like they're still respected and valued. Because things like, "OK, you're out in the shacks," that makes people sad. You know, that really bums people out. Like the black sheep. (July 29, 2009)

Removing FL teachers from the school building and reassigning their classrooms to portable buildings explicitly revealed the physical separation and marginalization of FL teachers based on their content area. The fact that such physical separation occurred at a number of schools in order that tested content-area classes might be moved into the building demonstrated once again the influence of high-stakes testing on administrators' decision making, as well as the devaluation of FL as a content area. Mary's use of the term "black sheep" pointed to the idea that FL doesn't belong alongside the other content areas. Her self-identification as being the party responsible for making teachers feel valued and respected reflected the idea that FL teachers are often undervalued and not respected by administrators and colleagues at the school level. Mary described an interaction with a principal which underscored this idea:

> One principal—and this is unconscionable to me—he literally said, "How does it feel to be a stepchild?" He said that! That's very—you know, we're all in this together, and you're calling *my* teachers stepchildren? They already feel like it. But… you know. (July 29, 2009)

From Mary's perspective, FL teachers are often considered as less important than teachers of other content areas. In the interaction mentioned above, one principal made plain his viewpoint on the status of FL teaching. Mary noted that many of the teachers in her department already have felt this way, but that having someone put the statement so plainly was "unconscionable" to her. The term "stepchild" was used several times in my conversations with Mary, as well as in interviews with some of the teacher participants, to describe the devaluation of FL teachers because of the content they teach.

The perception that one's content area is not seen as valuable by administrators and colleagues can be potentially disastrous for one's confidence and sense of teaching efficacy. This lack of support and devaluation of the content one teaches may prove particularly challenging for novice teachers who are already struggling to determine their place, as well as their identity as educators.

The devaluation of FL as a content area by principals may also be reflected in their hiring practices. In a phone interview with Mary Goodwin (July 2, 2010), she expressed her frustration with FL teacher positions yet to be filled for the coming school year at a number of schools within Castlewood ISD. She explained that there are a number of principals who were not "hiring efficiently," choosing to wait until they return from their three-week break in July to fill remaining FL positions:

> It really does put a strain on heart, mind, and soul, because I can't hire. And who's going to be left? We've already lost three really good [FL teachers] to other districts and I still have between six and nine positions [to fill]. Do you think this would happen if we were science or social studies? (July 2, 2010)

Mary again noted the influence of high-stakes testing in how FL is regarded. From her point of view, administrators would not likely postpone the hiring of teachers of tested content areas until late summer. However, as FL is a non-tested content area, and thus considered less important by many administrators, vacant positions may not be filled until shortly before the new school year begins. These actions by principals again indicate marginalization directly related to one's content area.

It is notable that the perceived devaluation of FL as a content area by some principals is not only felt by teachers, but by those in upper levels of administration, such

as Mary Goodwin, as well. When asked about the schools where the remaining FL positions exist, Mary explained that many of them are schools that might be considered less than desirable. She questioned the caliber of teachers who will still be seeking teaching assignments well into the summer, stating that Castlewood ISD had "already lost three really good [FL teachers] to other districts." The postponement of hiring of FL teachers indicates a larger cyclical problem that likely exists in schools where positions remain unfilled—by postponing hiring FL teachers, one is left with a limited pool from which to choose. This pool will likely include teachers who may be new to the profession or underqualified, as it would seem that highly motivated teachers would have already secured employment before late July/early August. Teachers who are new and/or underqualified may experience significant decreases in their efficacy beliefs as they approach the realities of teaching in urban schools, and will thus need structured support. Such support may not be available for these teachers, as a result of the professional isolation they may experience, the fact that their content area is not tested, and the devaluation of their content area by the principals who postponed their hiring in the first place. Consequently, they may elect to leave the profession, resulting in another FL opening to be filled for the next school year. While this situation is hypothetical, it is far from implausible; its cyclical nature would prove challenging for FL teachers, principals, administrators, and students. Indeed, to a certain degree, this was the case for Ernesto Lima. Though I did not have data regarding when Ernesto was hired to teach at Morgan MS, his decreased efficacy as he faced the reality of teaching within an urban school, combined with professional isolation and his perceived lack of support were factors

which contributed to his decision to leave after teaching only one year. Ernesto's case will be examined further in subsequent sections.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON CONTENT

The significance of what content one teaches is not only influenced by how colleagues, administrators, and other adults view that content, but also by the perspectives of the students in one's class. A persistent problem reported by FL teacher participants was the challenge of making FL content relevant to their students.

Both Carlos and Ernesto mentioned in early interviews their struggles to make the study of Spanish relevant for their students. Ernesto reported that many of his students held the attitude, "I don't know what's so important about Spanish. Why do I have to learn it?" (October 27, 2009). Carlos explained that among his high-school age students, "…it's hard for them to understand what is the need to learn a different language if you already know one" (October 28, 2009). Both conveyed their attempts to explain the potential long-term fiscal and professional advantages of knowing another language to their students, but, according to Carlos, "I don't think it's as relevant for them right now" (October 28, 2009).

Lucy, the only French teacher involved in the case studies, discussed similar concerns on making the content of her class relevant for her students:

> I always try to bring it back to, "I know that when you're here you hear Spanish, but if you travel, it's probably going to be French."… But that's hard, to make it relevant. Because how many of these kids are going to go travel? I don't know. And so, that's tough. (October 27, 2009)

Lucy's situation was similar to Carlos' and Ernesto's, in that the long-term benefits of FL study did not seem to have immediate influence on her students.

In our first interview, Ernesto explained how his students' perspectives on FL study were influenced by standardized testing:

> Well, it's hard because [Spanish] doesn't have a TAKS. So, the kids' mentality is, "Well, it's an elective. We really don't have to pay attention. If we pass, yeah, if we don't, we don't." So, they're like, "Well, we're not going to get tested." So, they already have this mentality [that] it's not an important subject. They don't understand that when you go to high school, it's a requirement, whether there's a TAKS or not, it's a requirement (October 27, 2009).

In Ernesto's experience as a first-year teacher, he felt that the students in his classes did not consider the study of Spanish to be as important as other content areas. From his perspective, this was a direct result of the fact that Spanish was not a tested content area. Although FL study is a requirement in order for high school graduation in Texas (TEA, 2001), Ernesto felt that his students did not see the value of FL study.

Ernesto elaborated that because administrators and other teachers at his school seemed to devalue FL as a content area, this shaped the opinions of his students, as well. In our second interview, Ernesto told me that because the TAKS subjects are emphasized over the non-tested content areas on his campus, "…the kids know that they can get away with it" (December 9, 2009). Ernesto viewed "getting away with it" as students not doing homework for Spanish class, not studying or preparing for tests, and not facing meaningful consequences from parents or administrators as a result of their failing grades. In his perspective, the mentality that FL is "not an important subject" has been infectious on his campus, making his task of teaching Spanish that much more

challenging. This sentiment echoed the idea expressed by Amanda, of how others view FL study as "the elective that doesn't matter."

Opportunities for Professional Development

The relevance of how one's content area is regarded was also evident through district- and school-level professional development opportunities for FL teachers, as well as teachers' feelings regarding these opportunities. Though Mary Goodwin, program director of FL for Castlewood ISD, strives to provide relevant and interesting opportunities for the district's World Language teachers on the days allotted for district-wide professional development each year, the agenda for said "waiver days" has become more regimented in recent history.

"My predecessor and I both pride ourselves in having quality in-service. And I think that we have managed to do that the greatest majority of the time," Mary asserted in our first interview (July 29, 2009). Many of her comments in that interview reflected the value Mary placed on content-specific professional development, and the importance of tailoring professional development to the specific teachers within her department. "I think of tools that the teachers need, because that's basically what teachers want" (July 29, 2009). After choosing a topic or theme for the year based on the needs of FL teachers within Castlewood ISD (i.e. the topic for 2008-09 was literacy and reading in FL), Mary told me that she has customarily brought in presenters to speak to the FL teachers on said topic.

However, beginning with the 2009-10 school year the District mandated that all content areas be on the same page, and that all professional development would be

"conducted in the context of the Curriculum Frameworks" (Appendix I). According to Mary, "We have never had such mandated targets for in-service" (July 29, 2009). In addition to a timeline outlining the agenda for all professional development waiver days for the 2009-2010 school year (see Appendix I), Mary was given DVDs with an accompanying Facilitator Script. As she paged through the Facilitator Script during our first interview, Mary noted prompts which read, "Now say this," in addition to multiple choice quizzes for teachers to take after certain sections (July 29, 2009). The entire Facilitator Script, with its accompanying DVDs and PowerPoints was eerily similar to the TAKS test, demonstrating a high-stakes test mindset in the production of the District's teacher development.

The district's decision to alter all content-specific in-service was most notable to teachers who had been working within the district for more than one year. During my observations on August 19th and 20th, many teachers conveyed their frustration with the district-mandated changes to the professional development days, discussing how valuable the content-specific workshops have been in years past. In my field notes from August 19, 2009 I noted, The district is prescribing in-service for the whole year, and this group of teachers seems quite concerned about losing a year [of professional development], and the futility of these meetings.

Lucy and Amanda, the case study participants who had been with the district for more than a year, also shared their perspectives on the changes to the district's in-service opportunities during our interviews. Lucy expressed her concern over the standardization of in-service days by the district in saying:

> One thing I don't like that Castlewood is doing, they're making [in-service] standard across the board, like giving DVDs for Mary to teach us, and that's no good. And I'm just like, "We are not all doing the same thing. You have to tailor [professional development]." I feel like this year the in-services have just been a joke. I mean, you're not learning anything, nobody's showing up, and used to, it was everybody's there and—I'm hoping it goes back because that's a big, big negative. Because you don't want to lose the support of your department like that. It is bad news. And I'm hoping that they're realizing that. And if not, even though they may be saving money through not getting presenters, you're losing good teachers or losing all of that momentum and enthusiasm that goes back into making a program work. (October 27, 2009)

Lucy's concern regarding the district-mandated changes regarding in-service reflected her perspective on the importance of content-specific professional development opportunities. This is specifically evidenced in her comment, "We are not all doing the same thing." As Lucy saw it, the widespread district-mandated standardization of professional development negated the fact that teachers have varying needs, dependent in great part on the content area(s) they teach.

Furthermore, this statement from Lucy reflected the significance of teachers' morale in professional development. Lucy suggested that since the changes had been put into action, FL teachers were "not learning anything" and that "nobody's showing up." This was in direct contrast with her professional development experiences offered through the District during Lucy's previous three years of employment. From Lucy's perspective, the District made the choice to streamline professional development principally for fiscal reasons. By being subjected to a standardized curriculum of professional development, Lucy felt that she and other FL teachers were "losing the support of their department," as a result of "losing all of that momentum and enthusiasm that goes back into making a program work" (October 27, 2009).

Oftentimes, as a result of being put to the side, the support that is made available to teachers of other content areas may not exist for teachers of non-tested subjects. When asked how development opportunities for FL teachers compared with those for teachers of other content areas, Amanda responded:

> Oh gosh, they have so many more [professional development opportunities] than we do. Our math and science teachers… have been gone on conferences and professional development days during school four times already. And ours are non-existent (December 9, 2009).

This statement revealed Amanda's perception of marginalization based on the content area she teaches. From Amanda's point of view, teachers' opportunities for professional development were directly tied to their content areas—teachers of tested subjects had more, while those of non-tested subjects had far fewer. In the same interview, Amanda also mentioned the impact of the District's decision to change professional development, and how the impact on her content-specific professional development opportunities:

> We had [content-specific development at] the beginning of the fall. We had one in October, I believe it was. And then we're not going to have another one until next semester…. Whereas it was [in prior years] every time there was a waiver day, we were with Mary. Or at least half a day to talk about whatever. And because the district is implementing so much of, "We want encompassed. We want everybody to be together and we want everybody to work towards the same goal…" There are just some days when you just really need that waiver day to be with your FL people, or your own groups. The last [in-service] day we went to, I spent [the first half of the day] with English/Language Arts and Social Studies. I had nothing to do with their Curriculum Based Assessments. The second half I was in there with math and science and still had no idea what I was doing (December 9, 2009).

Amanda felt that the District-wide changes in professional development, which included more time for development on the school-level as opposed to development by content area, denied her the opportunity to work with and learn from Mary Goodwin and other

FL teachers. Amanda saw Mary as a bonding point for teachers within the FL content area. Her comment on "being with your own groups," demonstrated the value Amanda ascribed to content-specific support. Amanda felt that her opportunities for connecting with other FL teachers were pushed aside in order that schools could put additional focus on the "core" tested content areas. As a FL teacher, Amanda's content area had been marginalized by the District, as well as within her school, where she was "stuck" in development sessions focusing specifically on high-stakes testing, a topic completely irrelevant to her.

This situation was not unique to Amanda or her school. In my first interview with Mary Goodwin, prior to the beginning of the 2009-10 school year, she commented on the futility and irrelevance that are often hallmarks of school-level professional development, "…It's a waste of time if they're working on disaggregating TAKS data. 'Well, you can go in with the English people.' Go in like a stepchild" (July 29, 2009). High-stakes testing is often the primary focus of in-service days at the school level. As a result, FL teachers are often assigned to in-service with teachers of unrelated content areas, going through data that has no bearing on their subject matter. Mary's comment speaks to the marginalization experienced by many teachers of FL, and echoes sentiments of "not belonging" and being "out of the loop" heard during interviews with other teacher participants. The perception created as a result of such experiences is that indeed, FL teachers are "stepchildren" who don't belong.

Lucy, Amanda, and Mary's comments all suggested that fewer opportunities for relevant content-specific professional development were an inefficient use of in-service

days for FL teachers. Moreover, teachers of World Languages throughout the District were being forced to participate in "professional development" days which did nothing to address their particular needs as FL educators. The District-mandated focus on Curriculum Based Assessments and Student Expectations, neither of which are relevant for nor applicable to teachers of FL within Castlewood ISD, indicated that tested disciplines remain the District's primary concentration, while non-tested content areas are completely and utterly neglected. The changes made by Castlewood ISD further isolate a group of teachers who already have limited interactions with colleagues and peers within their specific content area. The results of this disconnection—including "losing momentum and enthusiasm," further alienation experienced as a result of having "no idea" about what is being discussed, and feeling that they are "losing the support of their department"—have caused these FL teachers to believe that their content area is undervalued by the District. FL is not an "elective" subject; all students are required to have a minimum of two credits in the study of a Language Other Than English in order to graduate from high school (TEA, 2001). However, Castlewood ISD's lack of concern for the appropriate development of teachers of FL—suggested by the standardization of professional development which focuses almost exclusively on the needs of teachers of tested content areas—underscores the low status by which FL teachers are viewed. The limited opportunities for FL teachers' professional growth and enrichment, as well as the District's failure to appreciate their content area, have the potential ability of significantly decreasing teachers' morale, and thus perceptions of efficacy for FL teaching.

SUMMARY

In summary, marginalization experienced by FL teachers within Castlewood ISD was a notable trend throughout my interactions with informants in all phases of the study. Teacher participants and Mary Goodwin, Program Director of World Languages, described the positioning of FL teachers and FL as a content area using phrases including: "stepchild," "black sheep," "a nobody," "out of the loop," "useless," "overlooked," "the elective that doesn't matter," "doesn't fit," and, "it's important, but not as important." In reviewing the way that the teachers spoke about their content area as viewed by others, it became evident that these teachers often felt shunned as a consequence of the content area that they taught. The marginalization teachers experienced was perceived to be related to the influence of high-stakes testing at their schools and throughout the District. As teachers of a non-tested content area, informants reported experiencing marginalization through the devaluation of their content area by administrators and colleagues, the challenge of making their content relevant to students, and a lack of opportunities for relevant content-specific professional development.

CHAPTER 6: LEARNING WHILE DOING AND THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHING CONTEXT

One of the obstacles any beginning teacher faces is learning *how* to teach while teaching. While this is likely the case for beginning teachers across all content areas, Watzke (2007) describes the situation as he sees it relate to novice FL teachers:

> Beyond implementing the pedagogy of pre-service education, the FL teacher must continue to learn about teaching as the beginning experience is navigated and a context for pedagogy developed. This learning process can include myriad emotions, frustrations, and deterrents. Many beginning teachers leave the profession and may never achieve the success promised to them during their pre-service years. In the FL context, leaving teaching may be synonymous with never realizing the pedagogy advocated by the profession. (p. 74)

As all four of the teacher-participants involved in this study pursued alternative routes to certification, their "pedagogy of pre-service education" differed from the traditional pre-service education described by Watzke. Consequently, their on-the-job learning was in many ways even more multi-faceted.

In our first interview, Ernesto Lima described his perception of learning to teach after his first nine weeks in the classroom, "I guess… it is, it's a learning in progress. So, that's the only way to describe it" (October 27, 2009). As Ernesto and the other case study participants navigated their early experiences in the classroom, they were impacted by the lack of differentiation between novice and experienced teachers, and support elements specific to the contexts in which they taught. This chapter examines how these factors influenced the "learning while doing" of the four FL teacher participants.

THE LACK OF DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN NOVICE AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

It is not uncommon to hear teaching described as the "profession that eats its young." The difficulties of developing a professional identity are well-documented throughout the literature on support for novice educators (Halford, 1998; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The first-year teachers involved in this study noted that some of the greatest challenges in their induction year were related to the lack of differentiation between themselves and teachers with more experience.

Ernesto felt that his inexperience was a hindrance during his term as a first-year teacher. In some ways, Ernesto believed that his status as a true beginner was a liability:

> *Ernesto:* Luckily, today is the day that I'm in the right spot at the right time, so they couldn't say I wasn't there. Everybody else wasn't, I was the one that was there this time. Because I'm always the one getting… I get hit for everything.
> *Mitsi:* Why do you think you get hit for everything?
> *Ernesto:* I think because I don't fit the mold. And I'm the new kid. So, it's a combination of things. You know, and I'm still getting used to it. (December 9, 2009)

Because he was still "learning the ropes" on his campus, Ernesto felt as though he was often the target of negative attention from administrators and other staff members at his school. His lack of prior experience caused him to feel like the "new kid" who didn't "fit the mold" on a campus where seemingly identical expectations were held from both novice and experienced teachers. Ernesto had commented in an earlier interview that he felt he would "be fine in two or three years." However, he added, "But unfortunately, that's not going to help me today when I'm having all the issues (October 27, 2009)."

Carlos also experienced stressors related to the lack of differentiation between novice and veteran teachers on his campus. In our first interview, Carlos described the tension he felt as a new teacher trying to catch up to his more experienced colleagues:

> [Teaching] has been a little more work than I perceived. Also, in order to be a good teacher, you have to put a lot more time, more as a new teacher. And a thing that I haven't really liked is the fact that everybody else—well, not everybody else, but a lot of people—expect you to kind of follow form with everybody else when you're new. I don't like to play the new teacher card, but sometimes you kind of get run over by everybody else. They expect you to be right there with everybody else. That can be really hard to deal with. (October 28, 2009)

From Carlos's perspective, because many people with whom he worked expected him to be on the same page as the rest of the teachers on the campus, he felt that he needed to work harder and invest much more time in order to keep up. In his perspective, he was expected to be on equal footing with those with more experience while concurrently learning how to teach.

In our second interview, Carlos described how the alternative certification program in which he took part had a unique role in equipping him for his initial teaching experience:

> *Carlos:* Most of my tools have come from the [alternative certification] program, more than anything else. I believe or I feel like the departments, the school, and the district are working with a group of people at different levels of seniority. So, unfortunately, in a good and a bad way, the new teachers have to catch up much more quickly with everybody else and get in sync, let's put it that way. While, with the [alternative certification] program, there aren't levels, so they're able to teach us.
> *Mitsi:* Because it's all new teachers?
> *Carlos:* Exactly! So in school the developmental is more like—you're trying to catch up to everyone else and kind of learn on top of that. So it's a lot harder, not so much in the fact that we can't do it, just in the fact that since we don't have any basis, sometimes it becomes a lot more… constrictive. It's a lot harder to get to

> that point. So, I've had much more proper and efficient learning with [alternative certification] than anything else.
> *Mitsi:* That makes a lot of sense. So the [alternative certification] is sort of… as a foundational, or like a base of support.
> *Carlos:* Correct, yes. They have done a phenomenal job with all that, that if I wouldn't have had it, I would be more lost. And I at least have an idea of what's going on. (December 9, 2009)

Carlos succinctly described the dilemma of new teachers across most content areas; catching up quickly in order to "get in sync" with others who often have much more experience in the classroom. He also diagnosed a problem with traditional professional support at the department-, school-, and district-level: such entities are responsible for the professional growth of teachers across all levels of experience. Because all of the members of the alterative certification program in which he took part had no prior teaching experience, Carlos felt that the program was able to instruct them in more efficient ways. Throughout our interactions, Carlos repeatedly brought the focus back to his satisfaction with his specific route to alternative certification. The program in which he participated is described in greater detail below (p. 88) as well as in chapter 7 (pp. 110-111). Because his ongoing involvement with his alternative certification program had given him the "tools" needed to have a foundation for teaching, Carlos felt like he had "an idea of what's going on," and consequently had a higher sense of personal teaching efficacy that sustained him throughout his first year (see Appendix J).

In addition to the lack of differentiation between novice and experienced teachers, the participants in these case studies pointed out that as complete novices they were oblivious to what they didn't know about teaching. In our first interview, Lucy recalled

how her lack of awareness prevented her from benefitting fully from some early opportunities for new teachers prior to her first year of teaching:

> [Castlewood] ISD had several after-school things for new teachers. The New Teacher Academy, I didn't really… I don't know… I guess I didn't really—they have New Teacher Academy at the beginning, but you don't really know what you have questions about. You don't really have any idea. You're just like, taking it all in. And then [later] you get into it. (October 27, 2009)

Lucy recalled not having "any idea" about what her support needs would be as a beginning teacher. Lucy later explained that, "[As a new teacher] you really don't know what to come up with" (December 10, 2009). She elaborated that it wasn't until she had taught for a number of weeks that she had specific questions about particular practices and procedures for her classroom.

In our second interview, Ernesto recalled the confusion he felt prior to his first day in the classroom:

> …If you really are coming new and you really don't know, it's really hard. I didn't get my books until that Friday before school started. So I was all weekend trying to figure out, "What am I supposed to do?" And there was nobody for me to go to, so it was really hard. It's a little bit—I don't know if the expectation is, "Well you're a teacher, you should know how to do it. Or, just figure it out." (December 9, 2009)

Ernesto felt that because others viewed him as a professional educator, they also presumed that he should already possess the knowledge needed to thrive in the occupation. A number of context-specific factors made Ernesto's initial entry into the teaching profession that much more challenging; his lack of resources and colleagues contributed to his doubts about his efficacy for the teaching task. The significance of

context-specific support for beginning teachers as they navigated their initial experiences in the classroom will be discussed in the following section.

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT SUPPORT

As novice teachers are constantly learning on-the-job, the campuses where they teach are often the primary source from which they seek support. However, the diverse characteristics of individual schools have bearing on the amount and quality of support available for novice teachers. Amanda astutely summarized the importance of support for beginning teachers:

> I think in any school district, it doesn't matter if it's [Castlewood] or Austin or Brownsville, if you don't have a good support system, you're just floundering by yourself. You're just out there. And that goes for whichever content that you're teaching. (October 27, 2009)

For each of the participants involved in this study, factors specific to the contexts in which they taught influenced the type of support they received. While learning how to effectively work with their students, these teachers were also forming their professional identities within particular school cultures. Specific elements of each school, including the support of colleagues, availability of time and resources, and support of administrators influenced teachers' perceptions of teaching self-efficacy and professional support. These factors were often amplified by the degree of professional isolation that the participants experienced on their respective campuses.

The following section examines how context-specific factors affected participants' perceptions of professional support and teaching efficacy as they navigated their initial experiences as classroom teachers. The role of professional isolation, as it

specifically relates to FL teaching, was recurrent in my communications with participants and is interwoven throughout this section.

Teaching Contexts

Lucy Andrews

Lucy's four years with Castlewood ISD were all on the campus of Lincoln MS. Lincoln MS is a large, diverse middle school, enrolling 718 students in 7th and 8th grades. The student body was comprised of students who are White (41.5%), Hispanic (32.9%), African American (22.6%), Asian/Pacific Islander (2.1%), and Native American (1%). Half (50.6%) of the students were considered Economically Disadvantaged, and 46.9% were classified as "At-Risk" (TEA, 2009-10).

Lucy was part of a four-person FL department at Lincoln MS. She taught three sections of 7th grade French IA and five sections of 8th grade French IB. During the 2009-10 school year, Lincoln MS began using a block schedule, with five classes meeting each day. Although Lucy taught eight classes total, she did have a personal planning period after lunch every day.

Carlos Peralta

Carlos began his first year in the classroom at Murphy High School, a large, diverse school on the west side of Castlewood. Of Murphy's 1612 students, 49.3% were White, 29.8% Hispanic, 17.8% African American, 2.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .5% Native American. One-third of the population was considered Economically Disadvantaged (31.1%), and about half (49.3%) were labeled "At-Risk." The school's

teachers had a fairly even spread concerning years of experience: 39.8% had 5 or fewer years in the classroom, 24.2% had between six and ten years, 17.4% between 11-20 years, and 18.6% had more than 20 years in the classroom (TEA, 2009-10).

Carlos was part of a six-person FL department at Murphy HS. He taught six sections of Spanish I and one section of Spanish II to students between the 9th and 12th grades. Murphy HS was also on a block schedule, with four classes meeting each day. As Carlos taught seven classes, he only had one planning period every two days.

Amanda Martinez

Amanda, who was beginning her third year as a full-time classroom teacher at the time of this study, started at Stanley MS in the 2009-10 school year. In the two years prior to teaching at Stanley, Amanda taught Spanish I and II at two different urban high schools within Castlewood ISD.

Stanley School is a unique campus within Castlewood ISD. Students must apply for admission to the small K-8 school. Stanley enrolled approximately 550 students total in the 2009-10 school year, 203 of whom were in grades 6-8. Close to half of the student body (47.5%) was Hispanic, 35.6% were White, 8.4% African American, 7.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.5% were Native American. Economically disadvantaged students comprised 41.3% of the student body; 32.2% were considered "At-Risk." Stanley School was the only campus in this study having a status of "Exemplary" for the 2009-10 school year (TEA, 2009-10).

The experience of the school's staff also distinguished Stanley from other campuses in the area. Teachers with five or fewer years' experience comprised 21% of

the faculty, 12.5% were those with 6-10 years, 34.1% of the staff had between 11-20 years in the classroom, and almost a third (31.4%) had taught for more than 20 years (TEA, 2009-10). As Amanda told me, "Here, it's a new thing if you're a newbie" (December 9, 2009).

The sole FL teacher on the Stanley campus, Amanda taught Exploratory World Languages to 6th graders, Spanish IA to 7th graders, and Spanish IB to 8th graders. In addition to the classes she was teaching at Stanley, Amanda also taught Spanish courses for an on-line school based out of Houston.

Ernesto Lima

For his first year as a teacher, Ernesto accepted a position at Morgan Middle School, an urban school in a run-down neighborhood on the east side of Castlewood. The school enrolled 473 students, 84% of whom were classified as "Economically Disadvantaged." African American students comprised 63% of the school's population; 33.8% of the students were Hispanic, 1.7% were White, and 1.5% were Asian/Pacific Islander. According to the state report (TEA, 2009-10), 60% of the student body was considered "At Risk." More than half of the staff (53%) of Morgan MS had five or fewer years of teaching experience; 23% had between six and ten years of experience, 2.8% had taught between 11-20 years, and 11.3% were career professionals with more than 20 years in the classroom.

Ernesto was the only FL teacher on the Morgan MS campus. His teaching assignment included two sections of 6th grade Exploratory World Languages, two

sections of 7th grade Spanish IA, and three sections of 8th grade Spanish IB. His school utilized a traditional 8-period schedule; Ernesto's sole planning time was 1st period.

Support of Mentors and Colleagues

The importance of supportive mentors and colleagues in one's induction year is widely documented in the literature on supporting beginning teachers (Corbell, Reiman, & Nietfeld, 2008; Andrews et al., 2007; Marable & Raimondi, 2007). The case study participants involved in this study had mixed experiences working with those who were technically their assigned "mentor" teachers. However, the participants relayed how the presence (or absence) of supportive colleagues influenced the support they perceived from their specific teaching contexts within their first years as teachers.

Lucy

In our first interview, I asked Lucy about support she received from a mentor teacher during her first year with Castlewood ISD. Her response was somewhat surprising:

> I had a mentor, and I didn't know who it was until the end of the year… It's something I'm very upset about to this day. [At the end of the year] I got this sheet in my box saying, "Review your mentor." And I was like, "Mentor?" And so I took it to [the woman who was in charge of the mentoring program on campus], and I was like, "Who's my mentor?" And she was like, "Oh, I am. I am." And I was like, "Ok. Well, what do you want me to do with this?" And she was like, "I'll just sign it, don't worry about it." And I was just like, wait a minute! And at that time I didn't know that she got paid to do it. And after I was a mentor and I got paid, I was like, "How many [new teachers] did she 'mentor'?" You know? ... So, I didn't have a mentor that helped, but luckily I had great staff members. (October 27, 2009)

Lucy's experience with her "mentor teacher" was a source of great frustration and disappointment to her. Lucy's experience with her "mentor" exemplified the idea that just

because a program exists does not mean it will be beneficial to everyone. Furthermore, it illuminates the need for appropriate training of those who will mentor neophyte teachers.

Though Lucy missed out on the potential benefits of having a teacher officially assigned to mentor her through the school year, she took the initiative on her own to seek the support of colleagues. The support that Lucy received in her first year on the Lincoln MS campus was impacted largely by the encouragement she received from the campus librarian and a veteran Spanish teacher:

> …The librarian was so supportive. She was just here that first year, which I was so thankful for, because any question that I had… because it's not that just classroom management is enough. But then you're getting this stuff in your box and it's like, "What do I do? Who do I turn this into?" And so, she was a huge support to me. I'd go up to her with whatever it was, and be like, "What do I do with this?" And she would sit down with me and she would tell me what to do. And she said, "If you don't have time, I'll turn it in for you." She was great. Next door, Mr. G, [the] Spanish teacher, [was] always coming in. Seeing if I'm ready for the lesson, or if I need anything for discipline, or if he needs to watch my class because I need to take [a student to the office]—my first year I didn't know how to handle those big discipline problems, when I have a whole classroom to stay with. So he would come over and watch my class for me so I could try to figure out what to do. So that was—just fellow teachers. (October 27, 2009)

In this quote, Lucy illuminated the importance of having supportive colleagues for issues beyond the scope of pedagogy and classroom practices. While Lucy benefitted from having a colleague who also taught FL, she also found great benefit in working with others outside of her content area who made themselves available to her.

When asked how she formed relationships with colleagues who were so influential to her perceived support in her first year, Lucy responded:

> He [the Spanish teacher]… it was just he and I [in the FL department] the first year, so we always ended up being at the same table. And I had a lot of questions

> and he was really open about answering them. So I guess, he has a great heart, and so that makes a difference. And I felt like we clicked pretty soon on. And the librarian was just amazing anyway. So, I would ask her a question, and I felt like she was there. So, I felt like I seeked [sic] it out, as far as, I had questions, so I was willing to ask anybody, and they were the people that were willing to take the time and it really did help. And I was like, "OK. I'm not alone. It's ok." (October 27, 2009)

Lucy's willingness to "ask anybody" was essential in obtaining the support she needed during her first year in the classroom. She explained that the assistance given her by these two significant colleagues helped her to realize that she was "not alone." By actively seeking people to help her with her concerns during her first year, Lucy was able to move beyond any initial feelings of professional isolation she might have experienced.

Furthermore, the support Lucy received from select colleagues on her campus in her first year influenced her commitment to the profession. As Lucy told me in our first interview, "I remember telling people, I'm going back because of those people at [Lincoln] Middle School. I know I have to do it because they're behind me" (October 27, 2009). Lucy felt that her school had a strong sense of faculty morale. That morale helped Lucy find her way her first year. Furthermore, it caused her to seek ways to assist others in subsequent years such as serving as a mentor teacher and covering classes for colleagues when a substitute was not available.

Carlos

In our first interview, Carlos informed me that he was working with three assigned mentor teachers: one from his alternative certification program, one from the District, and one from the FL department on his campus. These three mentors regularly

checked in with him, observed his teaching, and gave him feedback. Carlos felt that these frequent visits from outside observers were beneficial to him:

> *Carlos:* I have a lot of people who come to see me teach, including you. I have mostly [the] Assistant Principal, uh what else, my mentor. I had a—from [the alternative certification program] we have a person that comes in and basically just observes us. And also then downtown will sending somebody periodically as well to kind of observe us and guide us. Now, as of last month, [the alternative certification program] told Castlewood ISD that was too much. Castlewood ISD stopped that other person from coming. But in my own case, I actually [would] much rather have them come and tell me what's going on than not. Because they all come at different times with different levels and things.
> *Mitsi:* And then do they give you feedback?
> *Carlos:* Exactly. I'll ask for feedback if they don't actually specifically give it to me. So, I'll ask for feedback. (December 10, 2009)

Carlos explained that he greatly valued the variety of feedback he received from the number of different people who observed his class. Carlos appreciated the varying insights he felt that the various observers brought into his teaching.

Though I did observe Carlos teaching throughout his first semester, he never asked me for formative feedback regarding what I saw in his classroom. As a result, I was able to maintain my role as a participant-observer without serving as an instructional coach. However, because Carlos commented that he "asked for feedback" from each of his observers—while never receiving any feedback from me regarding his instruction—I wondered to what degree he actually considered the weight of comments he received from those who observed his classroom. I also questioned if the feedback Carlos received from others subsequently caused him to reflect on his own classroom practices.

In addition to the assigned mentors he had through his certification program, school, and the District, Carlos often sought the counsel from one of his former teachers. In our first interview, he described this supportive relationship:

> Well, my mentors are some of the [people I talk to about my teaching]. Also in school, I have others teachers I can confide every now and then. Or someone specifically that I can go to with specific questions. But aside from school, the person who actually pushed me to become a teacher…was my English teacher from middle school, which I've been good friends with ever since. She—I confide in her a lot. I go to her back and forth about a lot of advice on many, many things. So, I think she's a person that probably I can—that I talk more candidly about issues that have happened. And the other [mentors], I am candid, but not at the same level. She knows me very well as a person, and also as a student, so she's able to be a lot more precise on her answers, and able to give me much better advice on what I need. (October 28, 2009)

Because Carlos has a long-standing relationship with this teacher, he felt he could confide in her as well as trust her advice. Although this teacher was not a FL teacher and taught a different grade level that Carlos did, the established morale that they shared made her a significant mentor in Carlos's perception.

Carlos was part of a seven person FL department at the high school where he taught. He informed me that the seven members of his department met once a month. When asked about his opportunities to work with the other FL teachers within his department, Carlos explained that the restrictions of his schedule made finding time to collaborate with and observe others difficult. The challenges Carlos associated with his schedule and teaching load will be discussed in greater detail in the section below. Throughout our interviews, Carlos sang the praises of the alternative certification program in which he took part. He frequently referred to the support he had received from his particular alternative certification program during his initial year of teaching.

> And once again, I'm going to give [the alternative certification program] all the kudos, because they really show you how to organize it. They really just compartmentalize and say, "You have to do this, then this, then this." And, I followed everything that they told me to do, plus a few extra things that I got from

> friends—teacher friends. And I kind of put it all together and it has worked extremely well. It has worked extremely, extremely well. (October 28, 2009)

Carlos felt that the support he received from his certification program was responsible for the successes he felt he experienced as a first-year teacher. Carlos's network of support, comprised of mentors (both formal and informal), colleagues, and an intensive alternative certification program prevented him from experiencing professional isolation in his initial year in the classroom. The support of significant people sustained Carlos's teaching efficacy even as he learned to negotiate the task of teaching.

Amanda

As Amanda taught at three different campuses in the three years she had worked for Castlewood ISD, the support from her mentors and colleagues varied greatly. In her first year with Castlewood ISD, Amanda taught at Dawson High, a large urban high school. The mentor she had that year was assigned to her through the certification program in which she took part. Amanda described her relationship with said mentor in our first interview:

> I had my person from my alternative certification program, but she only checked in with me once in the fall and once in the spring. Other than that she said, "I'm here by email if you need me." (October 27, 2009)

Other than two standard observations, Amanda did not receive much formal mentoring through her alternative certification program. The chair of the FL department for which Amanda taught observed her occasionally during that first year. In our second interview, Amanda recalled the nature of those interactions:

> My department chair, she'd come and check on classes every once in a while. She would tell me, "No, you're doing fine. It's ok; don't worry about it." But

> I never really was sure what—like what do you see? What am I not doing because the kids are kind of zoning out. Is it me? And that was my first foray into a big high school, and I didn't know, "Is it me? Is it the kids?" So I didn't know. (December 9, 2009)

Although Amanda was observed by more experienced colleagues and mentors during her first year in the classroom, the type of feedback she received was of limited value. Amanda's uncertainties about her teaching practices and her students' behaviors continued throughout her first year.

Amanda was in her third year of teaching during the time of this study. At that time, she was the sole FL teacher at Stanley School, a small campus which served students from kindergarten through 8th grades. Amanda explained how the support of mentors and colleagues differed between her teaching context at Stanley in contrast with that of Dawson HS:

> I think some of the difference is that here [at Stanley], the kids have been here so long, and the teachers have been here so long, and the staff—the administrators have been here so long… they don't leave. They know how the system works. And so when somebody new comes in who has no clue as to what they're doing here, [the staff is] already ready for that. They're ready for you to not know what you're doing. Like the first day, I was like, "I have no idea where to go," and they were like, "Just follow us." You know, not that we [new teachers] can't teach, just that this is a new campus [to us] and they know that they were the new kid one year. And I think at the bigger schools they get so many new people that it's just every year, every semester it's just constant, constant. And here [at Stanley], it's a new thing if you're a newbie. (December 9, 2009)

Data from campus AEIS (Academic Excellence Indicator System) reports support Amanda's perceptions about the disparity between the levels of experience of the teachers at Dawson High and Stanley. In Amanda's first year at Dawson HS, the school was rated "Academically Unacceptable." That same year, more than half of the teachers

at Dawson (52.7%) had fewer than five years of experience in the classroom. Consequently, the majority of the teachers were learning to teach on-the-job. In sharp contrast, Amanda was one of the seven teachers with fewer than five years' experience (21.9%) when she began teaching at Stanley School. On average, the staff at Stanley had 15.1 years of teaching experience. These more experienced teachers were able to make time for Amanda and use their experience to help her in her first year on campus. At Dawson HS, in contrast, the high number of inexperienced teachers made obtaining support of more experienced others more challenging.

In Amanda's experience, influential factors specific to the contexts in which she taught included general faculty morale. She described the camaraderie she perceived as part of the staff of Stanley, and its impact upon the school's students:

> Oh, everybody gets along. We all have lunch together, and we all goof off… And, you know, whenever we have to get together, the camaraderie's good—the kids know we're going to support each other. If somebody does something in one class, the rest of us are going to know it by the end of the day. We're going to know—just for example, the PE teacher told me that she was having a hard time with one of the kids in my homeroom. And I said [to the student], "What is this I hear about you giving the PE teacher a hard time?"… So, the kids know that we're all looking out for them. And we're all going to do whatever we need to do. We're not just going to let that kid just fall by the wayside… I feel like the kids here are willing to listen. And that they understand that we're in it to help them learn. We're not just the person behind the desk. (October 27, 2009)

From Amanda's point of view, the morale among teachers at Stanley School was unique, enabling them to communicate well with one another, while also addressing the needs of their students. The sense of being part of a supportive community built Amanda's confidence in her own teaching, and enabled her to be more aware of, and to better address, the needs of her students.

Though Amanda had strong support from the faculty and staff of Stanley School, she did experience a degree of professional isolation as the only FL teacher on the campus. When I asked Amanda if her lack of content-area colleagues had any effect on her, she remarked:

> Oh, it's kind of tough, because I don't have somebody I can go to and say, 'Now how do you teach this?' I have to go to my outside sources. (October 27, 2009)

Amanda acknowledged calling on her "outside sources," including former colleagues from her prior years of teaching. Amanda's prior experience had given her the benefit of having connections outside of her home campus to whom she could turn for support. Because Amanda had taught alongside content-area colleagues in previous years, she was able to call on those people when she needed specific guidance and ideas for FL teaching.

Ernesto

The challenges of learning to teach may create a sense of isolation for novice teachers in all content areas. However, the intense professional isolation that occurs as a result of having a dearth of colleagues in the same content area, while also having fewer opportunities for teaming and planning with those colleagues, is often the reality for FL teachers. According to Mary Goodwin, program director, "Where we see the most turnover is in the middle schools where there's no [FL] department" (December 10, 2009). Within the district, professional isolation experienced by FL teachers, particularly those who were the sole teacher of World Languages on their campus, was a contributing factor to teacher attrition.

Though Ernesto and Amanda both experienced the predicament of being the only FL teacher within their respective schools, their levels of prior experience provided them with very different options for pursuing support in the face of professional isolation. Amanda was able to overcome professional isolation via outside resources she had culled during her former years teaching on different campuses. Ernesto's network of outside sources was limited, as this was his first year as a teacher. As I worked with Ernesto throughout his first semester in the classroom, he shared his perspective on the many struggles he faced as a result of his professional isolation.

In my first meeting with Ernesto, he expressed how professional isolation had made his first year quite challenging. When asked if he had other FL colleagues on his campus, Ernesto replied:

> No. So that makes it even harder, because I really don't have anybody to go to. So I think that if I would have been in a high school environment during my first year, then I would have had somebody else [to talk to] when I'm having a problem with—whether it be a problem with a teaching matter or the lesson plans or anything like that, there would be somebody to go to. Instead of here where I'm just, "Well, this is what [the students] get because this is what I could do." And we'll figure it out as we go along, and if it doesn't work let me know, and we'll figure out again. So, I think those are the growing pains. (October 27, 2009)

As Ernesto was the only FL teacher at Morgan Middle School, he felt that he had "no one to go to" when he struggled and faced challenges during his first year. He believed that he would have benefitted from having colleagues within his content area if his first teaching experiences had been at the high school level. Instead, Ernesto considered his opportunities for collaboration on issues specific to FL teaching to be non-existent. His

references to "growing pains" and "figuring it out as we go along" addressed some of the dilemmas he faced as he learned about teaching while navigating the experience.

I asked Ernesto about any opportunities he had to observe teachers of other content areas on his campus. Again, the isolation he experienced as a first-year FL teacher was palpable in his response:

> Not really. Actually, I don't think I have [observed other teachers] at all. So, I think that—those are things that would help. Unfortunately, the difference is that I'm a language teacher. And it's a totally different teaching style than it would be in any other class. (October 27, 2009)

By calling FL teaching a "totally different teaching style," Ernesto evoked Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge, that pedagogy is unique to particular content areas (1986). Ernesto felt that observing teachers of other content areas would be of little to no value, due to the pedagogical differences between teaching World Languages and other subject areas.

Ernesto also explained that he was "supposed to" have opportunities to observe Spanish teachers on other campuses within the District. However, the restrictions of his teaching assignment and schedule made pursuing those opportunities quite challenging. He summed up his feelings regarding this lack of opportunity for observation of colleagues:

> So, I'm supposed to [observe other Spanish teachers] but hopefully it's not in May when the year's over. It ain't going to help much at that point. (December 9, 2009).

Although Ernesto felt that observing other Spanish teachers would have been helpful in his first year, he also felt that his schedule and workload prevented him from doing so. In

fact, Ernesto's schedule was also a hindrance in seeking help from teachers of other content areas on his campus. He described this dilemma in our first interview:

> Um, some of the [other content area] teachers are very good. If I ask them for anything then they're more than willing to help. Everybody's so busy, though, that it's really hard, and you don't want to feel like you're intruding. Plus, you don't really have so much time, so you've got to get everything done really quickly and try to rush through everything. (October 27, 2009)

Ernesto perceived his primary responsibility at Morgan MS was to teach, considering his own professional growth and development secondary. As a result, he felt that seeking professional support from other teachers would mean that he was "intruding" on other people's time. This perception, in addition to the limited amount of time Ernesto had for planning for his own classes, intensified his sense of professional isolation. Consequently, Ernesto's opportunities to seek the help and assistance of other more experienced teachers were limited, both in reality and by the pressures he felt to "just figure it out" on his own.

Ernesto's sense of professional isolation was exacerbated by his perceived lack of meaningful mentoring and support. When I asked Ernesto about professional support he had received during his first semester in the classroom, he responded:

> [There hasn't been] much. Anything I want to do I have to go do it on my own. I have to find it on my own. I really haven't had any major mentoring. I do have one, somebody from the District who comes in and helps me out once in a while, but major mentoring from the school itself, I really don't. (December 12, 2009)

Although he did have a mentor assigned through the District, Ernesto did not give much credence to the support provided through that relationship. He felt that any support or professional development he might have needed was something he had to pursue "on his

own." As Ernesto explained in our second interview, the limited support from his specific teaching context became a decisive factor on Ernesto's commitment to teach:

> So I'm—actually, my decision's already made. I'm not coming back to this school. I've decided that. There's a few [reasons why]. The commute; that is part of it. But that's not really the major part of it… The school staff. Like, we don't see eye to eye that well. And, the demeanor of the kids and the environment—it's not for me. I'll be glad if I finish the year. Let's put it that way… Honestly, I don't even know if I'll make it to Christmas. (December 9, 2009)

From Ernesto's point of view, context-specific factors were at the heart of his decision not to return to Morgan MS after his first year of teaching. The lack of support he perceived from mentors and colleagues was a primary motivator for his decision to leave the school. The environment of the Morgan campus weighed so greatly upon Ernesto that by early December, he was not sure he would even "make it to Christmas."

Ernesto's lack of content-area colleagues on his campus, in addition to his limited opportunities for working with other more experienced teachers, and pressure he felt to "just figure [teaching] out," contributed to a profound sense of professional isolation that he experienced during his initial year as a teacher. His struggles with professional isolation as he was learning to teach often prohibited him from obtaining meaningful support in his first year. Ernesto's feelings of alienation prevented him from gaining the support of knowledgeable others; such support might have helped him prepare lessons to better reach his students, and could have increased his efficacy for the teaching task. This lack of support was a contributing factor in his decision to leave Morgan MS after his first year of teaching.

Time as a Factor in Seeking Support

In addition to the support (or lack thereof) that participants received from their mentors and on-campus colleagues, school-specific factors including schedules and resources influenced their confidence as teachers. Both in their first year during the time of this study, Ernesto and Carlos mentioned struggles they had adapting to their teaching schedules. Carlos's teaching load including six sections of Spanish I and one section of Spanish II. Because Murphy High school operated on a block schedule—with four classes meeting each day—Carlos only had a planning period every other day. Thus, Carlos only had time on-campus for planning and consulting with colleagues two or three times a week.

In our first interview, Ernesto described his daily schedule at Morgan MS:

> I have two 6th grade [classes], two 7th grade [classes], and three 8th grade [classes]. So, this [1st period] is my only free time. After this, I'm done… By the time I get out of here, I just want to go home and I don't want to talk to anybody. (October 27, 2009)

In his first-year, Ernesto's course load was comprised of seven classes and he had three different lesson preparations each day. On top of this, his only planning time was during the first class period of each day. The timing of this break also prevented him from having opportunities to engage with and seek the support of his colleagues:

> You know, having first period as my planning period, and then I'm in classes and if I want to speak to anybody it's at 4:20 and everybody wants to go home. Nobody wants to stay here. Nobody wants to stay here. [I know that] because I'm the first one [headed home]. I'm done. (December 9, 2009)

Ernesto explained that after teaching seven classes every day, with only a 30-minute lunch break in between, he was mentally and physically exhausted by the end of the day.

In this state his main concern was not his continuing development as a beginning professional, but instead a desire to go home and leave the chaos of his school life behind.

Carlos and Ernesto felt the stress of having limited opportunities for planning during the school day. Furthermore, the limitations of their teaching schedules inhibited these first-year teachers from seeking support from their colleagues during the school day. When asked about his opportunities to work with the other FL teachers within his department, Carlos explained that the restrictions of his schedule made finding time to observe others a definite challenge:

> Now, every time I get a chance to see other teachers teach I would, but since I've got seven periods [of instructing], this is my only planning period. It's extremely hard to be able to kind of take off and just kind of see somebody else teach. (December 10, 2009).

Because his campus operated on a block schedule, Carlos only had a planning period every other day, thus two or three times weekly. Therefore, his opportunities to observe other FL teachers were severely limited. Despite this limitation, he explained that he had been able to observe his mentor teacher's classes some, as part of the requirements of his alternative certification program. As a first-year teacher, Carlos knew that colleagues within his content area were available to him. However, the restrictions of his schedule made finding time for collaboration quite challenging.

Ernesto's statements about his teaching assignment and workload also reflected concerns with his professional isolation. He made multiple statements concerning his teaching schedule and how it secluded him from others within his school. Of particular

note were his comments regarding how his schedule varied from teachers of other content areas:

> *Ernesto:* The other content areas get a lot more support. Way more. They have planning periods, they have teaming periods… so, anything that's TAKS or anything oriented they have everything. I feel like the stepchild. You take whatever's left and make the best of it.
> *Mitsi:* So they have 2 planning periods a day?
> *Ernesto:* They have a personal planning period and a teaming period where they will sit down and go through—I guess—what's being done and how is it being done with the team. [And] I, we, I am on what's called the "elective team." And it's a team, but it's not a team. The elective is music, Spanish, choir, anything that doesn't fit into anything else. And FL really doesn't fit into none of those. Because foreign—and I think the belief here is, "Yeah, it's important, but not as important. So no, you don't get to." And I think that's a problem. (December 9, 2009)

Ernesto explained that he, along with Morgan MS's music and art teachers, were part of a team that existed in name only. Because Ernesto—and the other teachers of "electives"—taught a content area that was not subject to a high-stakes test, he was only given one time for planning during the day. Contrastingly, teachers on his campus who taught tested subjects had two planning periods, one of which they spent with colleagues on their respective "teams." This differentiation reflected a marginalization of the content area that Ernesto taught, as described in chapter five.

The Availability of Relevant Resources

The availability of resources for FL teaching was also a concern to several of the teacher participants in this study. As Amanda asserted in our first interview:

> You know it's great to have a support system, and it's great if you can make those connections with other teachers, it's just hard to not have enough resources. (October 27, 2009)

Amanda was concerned with finding appropriate resources for teaching FL to middle school students. She explained that she had difficulties locating relevant, age-appropriate materials locally:

> …It's amazing, because there's millions and millions of resources, especially in foreign language, but you go to [the educational supply store] and you can't find what you need. You go to Teacher Tools and they have one shelf of bilingual material. And you can find that stuff at Barnes and Noble, but you've still got to find it age-appropriate, because we can't talk about wine and cigarettes! Here in middle school we can't do that! So, I find myself having to manipulate a lot of things that I find. (October 27, 2009)

In addition to her frustration finding pedagogically appropriate resources for teaching FL at the middle school level, Amanda found herself having to do additional work in order to make materials work for her particular students.

In our second interview, Carlos also shared his frustration with limited resources for FL teaching. He noted his particular experience within his alternative certification program:

> Everything—90% of resources out there are for your "core courses." Ninety percent. I mean, every single time there is a paper, there is a study, there is a way of teaching this, a way of teaching that, it's always with the core. Foreign language is kind of overlooked all the time. So while learning how to become a teacher, also you have to adapt everything that everybody else was doing from the core to foreign language. So yeah, there is tons of improvement needed in regards to that. (December 10, 2009)

Carlos noted how FL was often an overlooked subject within his certification program. As a new teacher, Carlos found the lack of content-specific materials frustrating, as it meant he had double the work of teachers of other content areas.

Amanda and Carlos suggest an issue that may add even more burden to the existing demands placed on novice teachers—having to learn to manipulate resources to

fit the needs of one's content area while also learning how to juggle the challenges faced by all beginning teachers.

In our second interview, Lucy mentioned the need for access to "realistic examples" for FL teaching. Such materials are typically not found in workbooks and textbooks. Teaching the culture of the target language group—through the incorporation of realia—often requires travel and access to sources outside of the traditional school curriculum. These require time and finances, both of which are commonly in short supply for beginning teachers.

Though Mary Goodwin maintained a library of materials for use by the teachers in her program—including various textbooks, videos, and workbooks—none of the teachers in this study mentioned utilizing those resources. Perhaps they were unaware that Mary housed such a library in her office. Or it is possible that the teachers' schedules prevented them from being able to obtain these materials from Castlewood's administration building during its operating hours. In any case, participants felt that having access to additional pedagogical and real-world materials for FL instruction would have been beneficial as they navigated their beginning experiences in the classroom.

SUMMARY

FL teacher participants felt that factors specific to their individual teaching contexts played a role in the degree of support they experienced, and consequently their personal beliefs of teaching efficacy. As much research on the development of teaching efficacy has noted their context-specific nature (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, &

Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007), the support of colleagues, and availability of time and resources seem logically connected with teachers' perceptions of support. The lack of differentiation between the support needs of novice teachers and more experienced teachers also impacted the degree of support that teachers perceived. Context-specific factors and non-differentiated support were areas of concern for the novice FL teachers in this study as they navigated their early years in the classroom.

CHAPTER 7: SELECTED MEMORIES—MAKING SENSE OF EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER VIA ROLE AS A LEARNER

As teachers begin their professional work in the classroom, they are faced with a number of challenges. One such challenge is the need for beginning teachers to continue to learn how to teach. Much of this learning takes place on the job, and is influenced by teachers' prior experiences with schools and schooling (Britzman, 2003**)**. For those teachers with traditional university-based certification, their pre-service years often involve a great deal of observation and time spent in classrooms. These experiences give them a different perspective for understanding schools, schooling, and the work of teachers. Through participation in traditional teacher preparation programs, prospective teachers have opportunities to "unpack" why teachers do what they do through interactions with professors, colleagues, and mentor teachers.

However, those who pursue alternative paths to certification may miss out on these opportunities. The majority of alternative certification programs offer few, if any, occasions for classroom observations or sheltered teaching. Consequently, alternatively-certified teachers often rely on their selected memories of what teaching is like, typically acquired while they themselves were students. This reliance on their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) has a number of effects on teachers' perspectives of teaching and their efficacy for the teaching task.

In our final phone interview, Mary Goodwin told me that the type of certification that teachers in her department have "makes a huge difference" (July 2, 2010). She commented that oftentimes, FL teachers who have been alternatively certified are missing

the "tools of the trade," due in great part to a lack of methodology courses specific to FL education. Mary described the shortage of content-specific methodology courses in alternative certification programs as "a huge disconnect." She elaborated, "You can't train people for teaching if you don't show them how to do it." From Mary's perspective, many alternative certification programs are primarily concerned with "passing the PPR [Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities test], and that's all they care about." Because they do not have opportunities for developing pedagogical content knowledge specific to their field, alternatively-certified teachers of FL must often rely on their selected memories. Consequently, these teachers make sense of their experiences as teachers via their perspective obtained as learners.

PRIOR PERSPECTIVES VERSUS THE REALITY OF TEACHING

As all four of the case study participants in this study were alternatively certified, none had the benefit of student teaching prior to becoming a teacher. Consequently, their beliefs about the nature of teaching were based on their "apprenticeship of observation," (Lortie, 1977) comprised of selected memories from their experiences as students. The beginning FL teachers' prior beliefs about the nature of FL teaching, as well as their expectations for what teaching would be like, affected their sense of personal teaching efficacy once they were faced with the realities of the profession.

According to Bandura (1997), the four principle sources of efficacy beliefs include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological cues. Bandura considers mastery experiences the most influential source of efficacy beliefs "because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster

whatever it takes to succeed" (1997, p.80). Through vicarious experiences, one evaluates his or her abilities to perform a task as a result of observing others carry out similar task(s). For alternatively certified teachers, who typically come to the classroom lacking the benefit of prior mastery experiences conducting lessons and working with students, their efficacy beliefs may be formed based on vicarious experiences acquired during their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975). Consequently, their selected memories of their own teachers served a basis for their own teaching efficacy beliefs.

Lucy

In our first interview, Lucy expressed how her initial experiences in the classroom came as a type of reality shock:

> Nobody can explain what it's like that first day… Unless you've student taught, I guess you kind of have a feel. But when you are the only [teacher in the classroom], I just don't think you can explain that. I just am so thankful every time that it's a new year that it's not my first. I never have to do that again! (October 28, 2009)

Lucy described her first year in the classroom as a "year of just stress." Her first year was spent in survival mode, "scared and trying to understand," feeling that her students knew that she didn't know what she was doing.

Lucy described her route to certification as an on-line course, comprised of some ten modules that were primarily centered on learning theories.

> I remember studying about cognitive learning and, I think pass—past—Pavlov… I don't know. And it was just an overview and then you took a little quiz at the end. Which, I'm pretty good at reading and then taking a quiz, and then forgetting it. And several times they had you remember your best teacher and write about that, and your worst teacher, and write about that. (October 28, 2009)

In Lucy's description of her alternative certification program, she noted how the program itself encouraged participants to consider their selected memories of their own teachers. In a sense, Lucy's alternative certification program encouraged her to rely on her selected memories from her experiences as a learner in order to make sense of her own teaching. Though the pre-service teachers involved in this online route to certification were asked to recall their own teachers, they were not necessarily asked to reflect on why those teachers acted in ways that they did. In describing her overall satisfaction with her alternative certification program, Lucy said:

> It worked well for me, because I don't like to have to go to class and stuff like that. I work well on my own. And the PPR thing, I did well. I took the test the first time and passed. I felt like it really prepared me, except for the actual realities of getting in the classroom… (October 28, 2009)

Lucy explained that the program "worked well" for her in part because it was well-organized and she received feedback on each module promptly after submitting them. Lucy felt that her route to certification prepared her well for the PPR test. This comment echoes the statement of Mary Goodwin that many alternative certification programs focus on "passing the PPR."

The "actual realities" of the classroom were a major source of stress for Lucy in her first year. She explained how her lack of preparation for classroom management hit home on her first day in the classroom:

> I never sat in a class for classroom management or anything. It was like, Day 1, I closed that door and was like, "They're loud!" [laughs] I was like, "Why are they loud?" And then I realized, I have to do this. It was like I had to grow up really fast. And it was fine after that year of just stress, the second year was much better. Because you know, you can then re-start with those kids. Because it's so hard, like after week 3 thinking, "Yeah, can we back up and try again?!" Because

> the kids are in a routine, and they know that you're not really knowing what you're doing. So, that's kind of rough, and you just kind of do what you can. But, the second year was a lot better. (October 28, 2009)

Because Lucy spent her first year in the classroom trying to survive as a teacher, her self-efficacy for teaching weakened. Many, if not most new teachers feel a decline in their teaching efficacy beliefs during their initial classroom experiences (Fives et al., 2007; Newman et al., 2000). Lucy felt that she did not know what she was doing, and felt as though her students suspected that as well. Other than some issues with classroom management and discipline in her first year, Lucy did not further specify which elements of her induction year caused her self-confidence as a teacher to wane. However, she felt that her experiences with alternative certification were lacking when it came to the day-to-day workings of the classroom.

In contrast, Lucy explained that her subsequent years improved greatly as she had the opportunity to "re-start" with later groups of students. By the time Lucy was in her fourth year of teaching—as she was during the time of this study—she had a much better idea of what to expect from her students and from herself. In our first interview, Lucy commented how her experiences had taught her to focus more on her students and their specific needs:

> You realize that it doesn't matter where [the students] come from, it's really about their family, it's about how much support they're getting. And so when you find out [the students] are behavior problems and where they come from, you [realize] you ARE their support. It brings it back home to that the importance is not just about French, it's about just these kids, and teaching them how to bring a pencil to every class. You know? To think ahead… you're really teaching them just skills at a lot of levels. (October 28, 2009)

In the statement above, Lucy illuminated a relationship between her stages of concern as she grew in experience as a teacher (Fuller, 1969), and her enhanced teaching efficacy beliefs. She used the example of bringing pencils to class to illustrate how her concerns regarding her students early in her career were confined to the happenings within the walls of her classroom. Visiting students' homes as part of a school-wide push to enhance student morale opened Lucy's eyes to her students' lives outside of the classroom. By focusing more holistically on her students—considering their support resources and other factors influencing their lives outside of school—Lucy felt that she was able to overcome many of the frustrations she experienced in her early years in the classroom.

Throughout our interactions, Lucy shared her perspectives as well as a number of different practices that she had implemented during her years at Lincoln MS in order to manage her time and resources, while also teaching her students to become more accountable. She explained:

> This is a work in progress… I'm just always brainstorming, like, "How can I give THEM the responsibility?" And that goes as far as pencils… just anything. (December 10, 2009)

She also described how her pedagogical content knowledge was constantly evolving to incorporate more "real world" uses of French. From Lucy's own accounts, she seemed to be ever-changing as a teacher in order to make the most of her instructional time while meeting the needs of her students. As she evolved as a professional, her confidence for teaching grew.

Lucy's self-reported personal teaching efficacy was quite high, due in great part to her prior experiences as an independent classroom teacher. Lucy's mean score on the TSES was 7.17, indicating that she felt she had "quite a bit" of influence in her classroom. Her score for classroom management was 7.25, for student engagement 7.25, and for instructional strategies Lucy's mean score was a 7.00 (see Appendix J).

Amanda

Amanda's commentary on her experiences as a first-year teacher echoed many of the sentiments expressed by Lucy. "The first year was surprising to say the least, because I got thrown into the lion's den, so to speak" (October 27, 2009). Much like Lucy's experience, Amanda felt that her first year in the classroom was something for which she was not quite prepared. Amanda described how her selected memories influenced the expectations she held of her students at the beginning of her first year of teaching:

> I still had the honeymoon phase that, "They'll come in and they'll do the work. And they'll be excited and they'll come to class." Because I just remembered my high school days—we came to class and we enjoyed being there (December 9, 2009).

In this quote, Amanda identified the source of her expectations—her own selected memories of being a student in a FL class. Because she recalled being an enthusiastic participant in her high school FL classes, she anticipated her own students would act in similar ways. Amanda referred to this state of mind as her "honeymoon phase." When her expectations collided with reality, Amanda felt as though she had been "thrown into the lion's den."

Amanda was in her third year with Castlewood at the time of this study and explained that things were "pretty good now" after "a rough start the first couple of years" (October 27, 2009). Similar to Lucy, Amanda's self-reported personal teaching efficacy was quite high. Amanda's overall mean score on the TSES was 7.5. She scored her efficacy for classroom management as a 7.75, her student engagement as 7.00, and her efficacy for instructional strategies as 7.75 (see Appendix J).

Amanda attributed her confidence for the teaching tasks to her numerous prior experiences in the field, including working with a variety of students of different ages and in different contexts—on the three different campuses where she taught within Castlewood ISD, through teaching Spanish online, and through her graduate assistant teaching while she pursued her Master's degree. Amanda felt that her variety of experience working with students of different levels and backgrounds had also helped her become more adaptable.

Ernesto

The collision between one's prior perceptions and the reality of teaching were also evident in stories Ernesto and Carlos shared with me. Since both were both beginning their first year of teaching during the 2009-10 school year, their prior perspectives on teaching were being reformulated throughout the course of our interactions.

In our first interview, Ernesto explained how his prior perceptions about teaching were not quite aligned with the reality he faced:

> I knew [teaching] was going to be hard. I didn't expect it to be *this* hard. It has not been what I expected… I thought it was going to be more, I'm not even sure what. I just didn't expect it to be this disorganized. (October 27, 2009)

In this quote, Ernesto spoke directly to the gap between his expectations about the nature of teaching and the reality of the task. After spending some nine weeks in the classroom, his perceived reality acquired from experience was quite different from what his prior expectations had been. Ernesto's beliefs about teaching had been formed through his selected memories from his years as a student. This perspective was evident in comments Ernesto made throughout our first interview (October 27, 2009), such as:

- "I know that if a teacher called my mother, my mother would…well, I'd be dead."
- "I was talking with one of the kids and I was saying, "When I grew up, my mother would have…"
- "I remember one time I brought home a C. And that was enough to get me killed."

Throughout our first conversation, Ernesto compared the behavior of his students—and the responses of their parents—with his selected memories of his own school experiences. Because his selected memories from his time as a student were in contrast to what he experienced as a teacher, Ernesto drew the conclusion that, "A lot of the kids and a lot of the parents just don't care."

The distance between Ernesto's prior expectations and teaching realities made a substantial impact on his efficacy for the teaching task during his first year. This gap

manifested itself in frustration, which Ernesto frequently expressed in comments such as, "I'm at the point of, if [students and parents] don't care, why should I?" Ernesto's self-reported efficacy scores also mirrored the shift in his prior expectations about teaching and his beliefs after facing the realities of the task. Prior to the beginning of school, Ernesto rated his teaching efficacy quite high: his mean score on the TSES was 8.33. His self-reported score on the classroom management subscale was 8.75, for student engagement, he rated himself at 8.25, and his mean efficacy score for instructional strategies was 8.00. However, by the end of the semester, both Ernesto's teaching efficacy and his perceptions of support had decreased dramatically. In December, Ernesto's mean efficacy score was 6.5, his classroom management score had dropped to 5.5, his rating for student engagement was 6.25, and instructional strategies was 7.75 (see Appendix J).

Carlos

In my first interview with Carlos, he reported that teaching, "…has been a little more work than I perceived. Also, in order to be a good teacher, you have to put in a lot more time. More as a new teacher" (October 28, 2009). Throughout our interactions prior to the beginning of the school year and throughout the fall semester, Carlos seemed extremely confident about his teaching. His self-reported efficacy scores indicated a very subtle decrease in his perceptions of efficacy over the course of the semester. Prior to the beginning of the semester, Carlos's mean efficacy score was 7.67; his rating for classroom management was 8.00, student engagement was 7.5, and his score for instructional strategies was 7.5. In December, his self-reported scores were slightly

lower; 7.42 overall, 7.75 for classroom management, 7 for student engagement, and 7.5 for instructional strategies (see Appendix J).

Carlos attributed much of his confidence for teaching to the support he received through his alternative certification program. The program in which Carlos took part was much more intensive than the programs described by the other participants in this study. It also differed in that Carlos was working toward a Master's of Education concurrent with teacher certification.

Carlos explained to me that his alternative certification program was conducted by a university located near Castlewood, Texas and was affiliated with Castlewood ISD. According to the program's website, it was founded in 1986 as "the first university-based approved alternative certification program in Texas." Participants must be admitted to the College of Graduate Studies, and complete 30 hours of field experience in their intended certification area prior to their participation in the alternative certification program. They complete a 10-week accelerated summer session of education courses, followed by a year-long "internship" working for a public school under a probationary teaching certificate. Participants take three course hours in the fall and spring concurrent with their teaching internship. Because the education courses are within the College of Graduate Studies, they are applicable toward the pursuit of a Master's degree. Supervisors from the University's alternative certification program as well as mentor teachers work with the teacher-participants throughout their internship year.

Carlos's descriptions of his alternative certification program gave the impression that he received abundant support from his involvement in the program, while at the same

time having opportunities to "unpack" his experiences in the classroom. Throughout our interactions, Carlos sang the praises of his alternative certification program. He frequently credited the program with "getting [him] on the right path" and providing him with the "perfect tools for teaching" (October 28, 2009). Carlos's perceptions of teaching efficacy decreased very slightly over the course of his first semester in the classroom, presumably due in part to the extraordinary amount of support he perceived from his certification program.

The negligible difference in Carlos's efficacy scores could be related to the great amount of support he experienced from his certification program prior to and during his first year in the classroom. Through having a source of support that he valued so greatly, Carlos seemed able to avoid the first year slump reported by the other participants.

SELECTED MEMORIES AND MOTIVATION FOR TEACHING—"LEARN FROM MY SUCCESS"

Participants' selected memories regarding the nature of FL teaching and learning, gained through their experiences as learners, also influenced their decision to enter the classroom, as well as their teaching practices. Carlos and Ernesto, both in their first year at the time of this study, referred to their desire for students to learn from their respective successes as a primary reason behind their respective decisions to become teachers. These perspectives, based in selected memories of learning, illuminated their beliefs that teaching is a form of modeling. Such beliefs were motivating factors behind their respective decisions to enter the teaching profession.

Carlos frequently drew upon his experiences learning English to relate to students in his Spanish classes. In our first interview, Carlos described how he felt his personal success as a language learner would inspire his students:

> I'm able to show the students that FL is not an additional thing, but that it's… you need to add to it. It shows them that I do it [learn FL] because I want to. So hopefully they'll get the same feel. (October 28, 2009)

From his perspective, the fact that he personally had learned languages in addition to his native Spanish was motivating to his students. He felt that his successes would inspire them. In my field notes taken while observing Carlos's classroom, I often noted how he used personal stories about learning English to try to connect with his students. In the small window I had into Carlos's classroom, his attempts at having students "learn from his experience" often seemed to fall on deaf ears. While Carlos reminisced on his selected memories as a language learner, many of his students continued to chatter amongst themselves, while others appeared to not pay attention at all. Despite their apparent lack of attention or concern, Carlos remained confident that his selected memories of language learning were influential for his students.

Similar to Carlos, Ernesto's personal successes as a learner were a chief reason for his decision to enter the field of education. As he told me in our first interview:

> I had learned a lot from my teachers. And my teachers always told me that the problem is that people that succeed do not come back to show what they learned. And I didn't want to be one of those. (October 27, 2009)

Ernesto's drive to "show what he learned" brought him into the classroom after retiring at age 40. He considered his opportunity to retire early as another success from which his middle school students could learn. Throughout the time I spent with Ernesto, he often

referred to his success as the driving force behind his career change. “I wanted to bring what I had learned to some people who I thought would appreciate it,” Ernesto explained, “and it has not been what I expected” (personal communication, October 27, 2009). Carlos felt that his personal history—including his acquisition of English as a second language, and his later accomplishments in the business world—would motivate his students to want to learn from him. His expectations of how teaching would be and how he would share “what he learned,” did not align with the reality he experienced as a classroom teacher.

Ernesto’s selected memories from his time as a student caused him to believe that his students would appreciate and value “what [he] had learned.” This altruistic attitude was a prime motivator for Ernesto, however it did not hold water once he was entrenched with the day-to-day realities within his classroom. In our first interview, Ernesto described his mindset prior to beginning his assignment at Morgan MS and how it changed as a result of his actual experience:

> I think they sold me the school in such a way that I [was] like, “You know, I think I can make a difference there.” And it was challenging. I came with that first-year teacher [attitude], “I’m going to make a difference here no matter what.” It doesn’t work that way. (October 27, 2009)

Ernesto’s initial altruism and desire to make a difference elevated his perceptions of personal teaching efficacy. Although he had not been in a classroom since he himself was a student, Ernesto’s confidence was influenced by his selected memories from his student days. So confident was he prior to the beginning of the school year that he felt he would make a difference to his students “no matter what.” His selected memories

contributed to his sense of purpose for becoming a teacher. However, Ernesto's experiences as a classroom teacher were in sharp contrast to his selected memories. He felt that his initial hopeful aspirations were overly romanticized, claiming, "It doesn't work that way." As his TSES scores reflected (Appendix J), the contrast between his expectations, based in selected memories, and reality caused an extreme deterioration in Ernesto's sense of personal teaching efficacy in his first semester as a teacher.

Though Ernesto was successful in the business world and able to retire at quite a young age, those successes alone could not have prepared him for teaching. Likewise, Carlos's achievements in language learning did not automatically transfer to success in knowing how to most effectively teach a language. Because the selected memories of these men caused them to view teaching as a form of modeling, Carlos and Ernesto anticipated that students would be eager to learn from them and their respective accomplishments. On their own, their selected memories of success—though highly motivational prior to entering the classroom—could not sustain their personal teaching efficacy once faced with the realities of teaching.

SELECTED MEMORIES AND TEACHING PRACTICES

Teaching as taught

The influence of participants' selected memories was also evident in many of the teaching practices that I observed throughout the semester. As the teacher participants had not participated in traditional teacher preparation programs, most had not had the benefit of observing teachers teach since they themselves were students. Consequently, their "apprenticeship of observation" became a primary resource for the foundations of

their teaching methodology. In general, these teachers had a tendency to teach as they were taught in their first year in the classroom.

I noticed this pattern in Ernesto's teaching the first time I observed in his classroom. As his students filed into the classroom, Ernesto had a list of vocabulary words along with their English translations on the board. The students' first task that day was to copy down the list.

Each time I observed Ernesto's classroom, activities were based on individual translation practice. In my field notes, I noted how tightly Ernesto's classroom practices were bound to the textbook. Indeed, though his students were learning a new language, I witnessed little, if any, emphasis on communication in the target language. The only times Ernesto or his students spoke in the target language were when they took turns reading dialogues from the text aloud. Most of the exercises his students completed in class were decontextualized fill-in-the-blank, respond-to-the-question, or direct translation activities. Throughout his interactions with students, Ernesto seemed keenly focused on keeping them quiet and on-track. He relied primarily on the textbook and an occasional worksheet, in addition to his custodial approach to student control, in order to meet this goal.

Given his age and the history of foreign language teaching methodology, it is most likely that Ernesto's own experience as a student in a foreign language classroom was one of memorization, translation, and acquisition of grammatical rules. Because he had been successful at learning languages through this type of approach, and because he had not had opportunities to observe any other ways of teaching FL, Ernesto relied on his

selected memories to make it through each lesson. As a result, Ernesto's teaching practices were similar to those by which he was taught.

While Carlos aimed to set a different tone in his classroom, the activities and teaching practices he employed also reflected a tendency to rely on selected memories. The first time I entered Carlos' classroom, his students were working on their warm-up: a fill-in-the-blank activity in which they had to choose between the verbs "ser" and "estar" and conjugate them in the correct form. After reviewing this warm-up with his students, Carlos explained the agenda for the day's lesson, "We're going to have sort of a boring lesson then we're going to talk about school supplies" (October 28, 2009). The remainder of the hour and a half long class period—whenever Carlos and his students were not engaged in off-task conversations—was largely teacher-centered. Carlos would lecture about a grammar point then present fill-in-the-blank exercises on the Promethian Board for students to complete individually. In my analytical notes following this first observation I wrote, Carlos does most of the talking in class and answers a lot of his own questions. He asks the students for answers (of the fill-in-the-blank variety) throughout the lesson, but isn't really challenging them to think (analytic memo; November 15, 2009).

In subsequent observations, I noted similar trends in Carlos's teaching practices. He continued to employ teacher-centered lectures emphasizing grammatical points, followed by individual student written practice. Because he did not use paper workbooks or the text frequently, Carlos gave the impression of being less tied to the textbook than Ernesto. However, most of the activities used during class sessions I observed were fill-

in-the-blank or conjugate-the-verb activities of his own creation projected on the Promethian Board. These discrete-point activities seemed quite similar to what one would find in a workbook, and typically featured vocabulary that was random and decontextualized. Carlos's lesson designs also lacked opportunities for his students to practice communicating in the target language. During my observations, students' target language production was limited to writing one or two Spanish words on their own paper as they filled in the appropriate blanks.

In both Carlos and Ernesto's classrooms, I saw little evidence that they were reflective of their teaching practices. Both taught lessons focused primarily on grammar and neither employed a communicative language teaching approach. Furthermore, neither teacher seemed to be concerned with the language interests that their students might have. Carlos told me outright in our second interview, "I think that we should teach the whole language, not the language that students may want to learn" (December 9, 2009). The mindset of the teacher (and textbook) as the principal sources of knowledge demonstrated both men's lack of familiarity with current best practices for FL teaching. Both of these first-year teachers appeared to rely on selected memories by teaching as they had been taught; using translation, memorization, and fill-in-the-blank activities as their primary forms of student language production. These practices were a testament to how these teachers made sense of their roles as teachers via their perspectives gained as learners.

The evolution of selected memories

In contrast to the practices of the first-year teachers, the teaching practices of Lucy and Amanda demonstrated the wisdom gained through their experiences in the classroom. As both the other informants had taught for multiple years prior to this study, their selected memories of FL teaching were not limited to what they had seen their own teachers do. Instead, their teaching practices indicated a level of reflection on how best to accommodate the needs of the particular students in their respective classes.

In Amanda's classroom, the benefit of her prior experience seemed evident in the ways that she related to her students. At the beginning of the class, while students worked on their warm-up, Amanda walked amongst them, checking work and ensuring they were on task. However, these interactions with her students were more than just checking on their language practice; in my field notes from observing Amanda's classroom (December 9, 2009), I noticed how she built and maintained rapport with the individuals in her classroom. From telling one student, "Feliz cumpleaños," to asking a student whose arm was in a sling how her elbow was doing, Amanda demonstrated a level of concern and respect for her students.

Amanda's individualized attention to students and their particular needs was evident throughout her lesson as well. While Amanda employed a teacher-directed lesson on verb conjugation, she regularly stopped to check in with individual students, ensuring that they were on track and comprehending the content of the day's lesson. While focusing on verb conjugation, Amanda used a video from TeacherTube, a spoof of

the song "I'm Bringing Sexy Back," and asked her students to sing along, in order that they would become familiar with the verb endings.

In our first interview, Amanda expressed how important it was to her to accommodate the particular wants and needs of her students:

> I try to make [learning Spanish] really comfortable…You're going to say something wrong, it's ok. If I can bring them comfort in what they know—they know technology, they know games, they know dance—when I put them in a comfort zone, they're ok. (October 27, 2009)

Amanda employed more guided practice than I observed in the classrooms of the first-year teachers, working through examples with students before asking them to complete exercises on their own. Additionally, the arrangement of Amanda's classroom, in which students were seated in small groups, facilitated communication between students. This enabled them to work together and use their peers as resources.

Amanda spoke to how her teaching practices had changed from her first year to her third during our first interview:

> I think I've been able to get over that "It's this way" lecture, PowerPoint, copy the notes, do this [format]… I really think I've been able to adapt more. (October 27, 2009)

For Amanda, adapting meant bringing in resources that her students could relate to and get excited about—such as videos, songs, rhymes, and riddles—instead of relying solely on textbooks and worksheets. Amanda's selected memories of how teaching should be had evolved since her first experiences in the classroom. No longer was she relying on her "apprenticeship of observation" to direct her teaching practices; with the wisdom gained from her three years of experience, Amanda's teaching practices had evolved

from teaching as she was taught to teaching in ways that focused on the needs of her students.

Lucy's teaching practices also testified to the wisdom gained through her ongoing experiences as a classroom teacher. The differences in her teaching practices—in comparison with the other teachers I observed—were obvious from the very beginning of her class. After greeting her 7th grade students using primarily French, Lucy facilitated student-specific oral language practice by asking them questions about themselves (i.e. how they were feeling, their age, what classes they have, what they like to eat, what sports/games they like to play) all in the target language. For the first 10-15 minutes of class, both teacher and students spoke exclusively in French. Of all the observations I conducted for this study, Lucy's class spent the most time in the target language, and was also the most focused on having students produce language about themselves.

Following the oral language practice, Lucy seamlessly transitioned her class into vocabulary practice. After making vocabulary flashcards, students worked in groups of two and three quizzing each other in French and English on the new vocabulary. Vocabulary practice gave way to a cultural lesson on Quebec City, in which Lucy utilized the textbook to guide the students. Throughout the class session, Lucy facilitated students' work. However, they were the ones responsible for doing the work.

There is never a dull moment in Lucy's class, I wrote in my field notes (December 10, 2009). Her pacing of activities went smoothly and during each activity everyone had a specific task to accomplish. Lucy's judicious use of a timer—displayed prominently on the Promethian Board—helped her students monitor their own progress

and time spent on each task. Though the class session was one and a half hours long, the time seemed to fly by and not a minute was wasted.

In our second interview, Lucy explained how her teaching practices had evolved during her time at Lincoln MS, "I used the workbooks my first year—that was the hardest thing to grade, because [I would] assign a few workbook pages and they do it and I didn't really know *why* they were doing it." Lucy's first-year reliance on worksheets and the textbook, and the challenges of grading such assignments—a throwback to her selected memories of classroom language learning—caused Lucy to reflect on the real-world benefit of her teaching practices. In her fourth year, Lucy stated that she wanted to:

> …keep focused on what's important. Like not just worksheets, but what are they *doing* today? They're going to be writing and speaking. And then tomorrow, they need to do some listening, because we haven't done that yet. And it helps me to remember to make the activities really improve their French, rather than just pass the time. (December 10, 2009)

This reflection on making activities that are meaningful for students and that help them truly develop abilities in a FL was a product of Lucy's years of experience. When planning activities for her students, Lucy began to ask herself, "What would they really want to do with the language?" By becoming more aware of the real-world applications of French for her students, Lucy moved past teaching by traditional textbook- and worksheet-bound lessons, to developing tasks that were realistic and relevant for her students.

Throughout our interactions, Lucy also reiterated how her years of teaching experience had made her aware of the importance of teaching her students responsibility, while teaching the whole student. "The importance is not just about French, it's about

these kids and teaching them how to bring a pencil to every class…to think ahead. And so, you're really teaching them skills at a lot of levels" (December 10, 2009). Through opportunities to connect with the community of her students outside of the school, Lucy became aware of her role as a supportive adult in the lives of her students. This caused a transition in her thinking, "How can I give *them* the responsibility?" which in turn affected her classroom practices.

SUMMARY

Through observing the teacher participants involved in this study, the role of selected memories obtained from experiences as a learner was evident in the teaching practices of the first-year teachers. These teachers demonstrated a tendency to teach as they had been taught, with little reflection on the needs or desires of their students. The more experienced participants reflected on the evolution of their teaching practices from their first-year. As they acquired additional mastery experiences in the classroom, they were able to adapt more as teachers. In turn, they moved from "survival" methods of teaching, to considering the particular needs their students. As the teachers gained more experience, they were less reliant on their "apprenticeship of observation" in their teaching practices, and were able to reflect on their own experiences as teachers, rather than those selected memories from their time as learners.

CHAPTER 8: INTEGRATION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

My primary purpose in conducting this study was to examine the personal teaching efficacy of FL teachers in a major urban public school district in Texas, as well as factors influencing their efficacy. The study also sought to explore the potential relationship between beginning FL teachers' personal teaching efficacy and their perceptions of professional support; in particular, content-specific support. A mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003) was employed in order to utilize the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The use of a mixed methods design accommodated triangulation of data sources and allowed for reinforcement of results. The quantitative portion of the study utilized a survey; the qualitative component was comprised of case studies of four FL teachers.

The research questions guiding this investigation were: 1) what influences beginning FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy?, and 2) what, if any, relationship exists between FL teachers' perceptions of professional support and teaching efficacy? In this chapter, I will provide a summary and discussion of the research findings, integrating the quantitative and qualitative results, and offer some interpretations and implications. It is my aim that doing so will contribute to the field's understanding of the efficacy beliefs of FL teachers and the role that support and beginning experiences play in their formation.

SUMMARY AND INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Experience, Student Engagement, and Instructional Strategies

Survey data were collected from FL teachers within Castlewood ISD prior to the beginning of the 2009-10 school year. The 45 teachers who responded to the survey rated their self-perceptions of teaching efficacy as generally high. The FL teachers in this survey had mean efficacy scores of 7.49 on the 9-point Likert scale, indicating that they felt they could do "quite a bit" in the situations about which the survey asked. Upon examination of the three subscales of the TSES, some differences in perceptions of efficacy emerged between varying demographic groups. Although teachers' experience did not demonstrate a significant relationship with their overall TSES scores, two of the dimensions of the TSES did indicate a relationship with teachers' level(s) of classroom practice. Correlations between teachers' experience and efficacy for student engagement were negatively related (r= -.320, p<.05), indicating that those with fewer years of experience rated their abilities to motivate and engage students more highly than did those with more experience.

A possible explanation for this unexpected result can be found in data from the case of Carlos. Carlos entered the classroom self-assured in his abilities as a teacher and confident that his students would learn from his personal successes. In my observation notes, taken as I watched Carlos teach, I noted that I got a "cool guy vibe" from him. I wrote, he is a likeable guy, however it seems as though he's trying very hard to win the favor of his students (observation notes, October 28, 2009). The way that Carlos spoke to and interacted with his students conveyed the notion of him wanting to be "shoulder-to-

shoulder" with them. His practices of engaging in his students' off-topic conversations, rather than re-directing them toward objectives of the lesson; permitting students to leave the class (for drinks of water, to go to their lockers, etc.) after initially denying their requests; and even his tolerance of student use of electronics in class (such as iPods and cell phones) conveyed a sense of "wanting to be liked." Student engagement, perceived as having students view him as a "cool teacher" was important to Carlos.

Similar to Carlos, Lucy also felt that students' perceptions of their teachers seemed so important to her during her first year in the classroom. She described this in our first interview:

> You get caught up in wanting to—especially with the middle school age, you want them to like you, because it's so… you know, they're so involved with who they like and who they hate. And it's so important, I guess. (October 27, 2009)

Lucy's comment illuminated the situation that many new teachers may face—that of gaining the acceptance of students. Because students are so involved in who they like and do not like, young teachers may often get "caught up" in trying to earn their students' acceptance. Similar to Lucy's description, Carlos seemed to be "caught up" in wanting his students to like him.

The ideas and practices shared by Carlos and Lucy characterize "student engagement" as a way to motivate and get on the same level as one's students. Through these practices, beginning teachers attempt to gain the acceptance of their students. According to Fuller (1969), teachers go through a developmental series of "Stages of concern" as they grow professionally. Fuller claims that beginning teachers operate within the "self" stage of concern. This stage is marked by concerns for self-adequacy

and acceptance from students (Watzke, 2007). Beginning teachers' concerns regarding perceptions their students have of them may explain why their initial efficacy for "student engagement" appears higher than that of their more experienced colleagues. Novice teachers may hold higher efficacy beliefs for student engagement because of their initial drive to motivate, connect with, and "make a difference" to their students.

In contrast with the findings on experience and student engagement, correlational analysis revealed a positive relationship between teachers' experience and efficacy for instructional strategies (r= .338, p<.05). Teachers with more years of FL teaching experience felt more efficacious in areas such as assessment, giving alternative explanations, and questioning strategies than did those with less experience.

Bandura (1997) asserts that mastery experiences are the prime source of efficacy beliefs. In his study of FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy, Swanson (2010) noted a similar trend and commented that "time spent teaching FLs… [has] an impact on increased FL teaching efficacy" (p. 63). Because teachers with more years in the classroom have a greater wealth of mastery experiences, it makes sense that they would have higher efficacy for instructional strategies than their less-experienced colleagues.

Furthermore, teachers' developmental stages of concern might also justify this distinction in efficacy scores. With time and experience, teachers' priorities and concerns evolve. According to Fuller (1969), the second stage of concern is for the task of teaching. Teachers' primary interests in this stage include instructional methods and delivery of the curriculum (Watzke, 2007). In the third stage of teacher concern—that of concern for impact—meeting the diverse needs of students becomes paramount. As

teachers progress through these stages of development, attaining experience and becoming more attuned to the needs of learners, it seems logical that their perceived efficacy for instructional strategies would continue to strengthen.

Evidence from the case studies explaining teachers' reliance on "selected memories" also sheds light on the difference in efficacy beliefs between teachers with varying levels of experience. Because Amanda, Carlos, Ernesto, and Lucy were all alternatively certified, none had the benefit of scholarship associated with traditional teacher certification. Furthermore, they had limited access to observe FL classes outside of their own "apprenticeships of observation" (Lortie, 1975). Because memories of how their own teachers taught often guided their own classroom practices, their store of instructional practices was quite limited. Consequently, their beliefs about FL teaching practices—formed during their experiences as learners—may account for their lower self-reported ratings in instructional strategies.

Teaching Assignment and Context-Specific Support

In analysis of the survey data, a relationship emerged between participants' teaching assignment (whether they taught at the high school or middle school level) and their perceptions of context-specific support. Though little variation existed in the self-efficacy reports of middle school and high school FL teachers, *t*-tests showed a significant relationship between the level taught and administrative support ($t(41) = 3.20$, $p = .003$). Teachers at the middle school level reported greater perceptions of administrative support than their colleagues at the high school level. A similar trend was noted between teaching level and colleague/resource support ($t(26) = 2.72$, $p = .011$);

middle school FL teachers reported a higher perception of support from colleagues and resources than did high school FL teachers.

The data from interviews with case study participants showed a range of perspectives that did not always align with the results of the survey analysis regarding FL teachers' teaching assignment and perceived support. In our second interview, Mary Goodwin told me how influential teaching as a part of a larger FL department was to the retention of FL teachers within the district, "Where we see the most turnover is in the middle schools where there's no [FL] department" (December 10, 2009). From Mary's perspective, the professional isolation experienced by middle school FL teachers in the district was a reason for their higher rates of attrition. This perspective seems contradictory to the quantitative finding that middle school FL teachers within Castlewood ISD felt more supported by administrators, colleagues, and resources than those who taught within FL departments at the high school level.

Ernesto, whose first year as a teacher was at the middle school level, personified the notion that professional isolation often results in teacher attrition. With no colleagues to turn to for help and guidance, Ernesto struggled throughout his first semester in the classroom. In our first interview, he told me how he imagined his situation would be different were he teaching at the high school level instead of middle school:

> I think that if I would have been in a high school environment during my first year, then I would have had somebody else [to talk to] when I'm having a problem with—whether it be a problem with a teaching matter or the lesson plans or anything like that, there would be somebody to go to. Instead of here where I'm just, "Well, this is what [the students] get because this is what I could do." (October 27, 2009)

Ernesto felt that his professional isolation was an impediment to his professional development in his first year in the classroom. He held the view that teaching as part of a FL department at a high school would have given him opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in order to improve his teaching practices. Perhaps he romanticized the high school environment as he felt increasingly isolated on his campus.

In addition to feeling as though he lacked colleagues to turn to for help, Ernesto commented on struggles he experienced as he tried to understand comments he received from the administrators of Morgan MS:

> I've had the Assistant Principals come in and [say], "We love your class," and then the Principal comes in and [says] "Hey, I hate your class." So it's… sometimes I'm not even sure which way I'm going. Because I'm like, "If these two say yes and [the other says] no, then something is wrong here…" So, it's been a little confusing, to say the least. (December 9, 2009)

Ernesto's perceived support from administrators and colleagues decreased during his first-year experience. Ernesto's experience conflicted with the quantitative finding that middle school teachers felt more administrative and collegial support than their high-school teaching peers.

The case of Amanda Martinez was in partial agreement with quantitative findings on middle school FL teachers' perceptions of administrative and collegial support. Amanda felt that she had the support of the administration and colleagues at Stanley School. However, as she was the only FL teacher on the campus, she experienced a degree of professional isolation, which she overcame through the use of "outside resources." Amanda stated that she would have appreciated having more opportunities to

work with colleagues within her content area to plan lessons and share instructional strategies.

Lucy Andrews was the only case study participant who was part of a FL department at the middle school level. Her perspective on the support she received from the administrators and colleagues at Lincoln MS agreed with the trend revealed in the quantitative data. Lucy asserted that the support she received from her colleagues and the administration during her four years at Lincoln MS was a chief reason she had remained in the profession. As she explained in our first interview, "I remember telling people, 'I'm going back because of those people at [Lincoln] Middle School.' I know I had to do it because they're behind me" (October 27, 2009). Lucy explained the benefits she experienced by having colleagues within her content area whom she could consult for ideas and advice, particularly related to keeping her instruction relevant for her students. Such interactions helped strengthen her efficacy for instructional strategies; Lucy felt that having alternative means of instruction and forms of assessment (i.e. rubrics) helped her motivate her students and allowed her additional avenues for explaining content in meaningful ways.

Though quantitative data revealed that middle school FL teachers within Castlewood ISD felt more support from administrators and colleagues than their high-school-teaching colleagues, data from the case studies did not always agree with this trend. As the quantitative surveys were administered before the school year began, perhaps middle school teachers felt more optimistic about the support of their administrators and colleagues at that time. Further research, surveying teachers at

multiple points throughout the semester, might better elucidate differences in perceived support from administrators, colleagues, and resources at the middle school and high school levels.

Predictors of Efficacy: Commitment, Assignment/Workload, and Classroom Climate

I used linear regression analysis to determine which factors of the quantitative surveys—including teacher demographics and their perceptions of support—accounted for the most variance in FL teachers' self-reports of teaching efficacy. A significant model emerged from regression of three of the dimensions of the PSI instrument—commitment, assignment/workload, and classroom climate ($F= 15.252$, $p=.000$). The relationship between the variables was fairly high ($R=.726$, $R^2=.527$, adjusted $R^2=.493$), with these three predictor variables explaining almost 50% of the variance in FL teachers' self-reported perceptions of self-efficacy. This finding suggested that teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, in conjunction with their contentment with their teaching assignment and workload, and the climate within their classrooms, were related to how they felt about their capabilities for teaching. These three factors seemed to be the best predictors of teachers' self-reported perceptions of teaching efficacy on the quantitative instruments used in this study.

Data from the qualitative case studies also identified connections between teachers' efficacy, their teaching assignment, and commitment to the profession. These trends were notable in the case of Ernesto. Overwhelmed by the initial details of his

teaching assignment, Ernesto's efficacy beliefs began to falter. Ernesto described how his first-year class load often seemed overwhelming:

> I teach World Languages to 6th graders… So, right now I'm teaching [them] French. And then, 7th and 8th [grades] I'm teaching Spanish. So, it's a little bit crazy, to say the least, because that means I've got to do three different plans every week. I've got to remember what I'm teaching at all times… so, I've got to keep focused that I'm not teaching the 7th graders the 8th grade work, and vice versa, and it gets a little bit [confusing]. Sometimes I'm like, you know, "Did I teach this? Did I not? Let me go back." And then the kids are like, "You didn't teach us that." And I'm like, "Oh yes I did!" And then I'm like, "No, I didn't. I taught it to the other [class]." So, it gets a little frustrating, I guess sometimes. But, slowly but surely it's… I say it's coming along. Or at least I expect that it is. Whether it is or it isn't, I don't know, I guess is yet to be seen (October 27, 2009).

Planning for three classes, and keeping track of what he had taught to which class, was a source of confusion and frustration during Ernesto's induction year. He thought that he was "slowly but surely" progressing as a teacher, however Ernesto continued to be plagued by uncertainty regarding his teaching practices. The doubts that manifested throughout Ernesto's first semester in the classroom negatively influenced his teaching efficacy.

An issue compounding the frustration Ernesto felt regarding his assignment and workload was his lack of planning time during the school day. Ernesto taught seven class sections each day and had one period available for planning. By some stroke of misfortune, that one planning period happened to be during the first class of the day. Other than a 30-minute lunch break, Ernesto had a solid day of teaching from 9:45am until 4:00pm every day. Ernesto's full day of teaching severely limited his time for seeking the help of colleagues on his campus. He explained that the only time he had to speak with anyone was at the end of the school day. At that point, Ernesto explained that,

"…Everybody wants to go home. Nobody wants to stay here. [I know that] because I'm the first one [headed home]. I'm done" (December 9, 2009).

Ernesto was mentally and physically exhausted by the end of the day. The stress, isolation, mental and physical exhaustion Ernesto experienced as a result of his teaching assignment and workload served as physiological cues (Bandura, 1997), which contributed to his decreased efficacy beliefs in his first semester.

Ernesto's efficacy and commitment to teaching also seemed to be directly related. As his teaching efficacy beliefs plummeted throughout his first semester, Ernesto's commitment to Morgan MS began to waver. By the end of his first semester, when Ernesto's self-reported efficacy scores had dropped sharply from his initial perceptions (see Appendix J), he asserted that he wasn't sure he would "even make it to Christmas" (December 9, 2009).

Qualitative data also revealed a trend between teachers' contentment with their teaching context and their commitment to the profession. Lucy and Amanda reported that context-specific factors related to their specific teaching venues were a large contributor to their respective sense of teaching efficacy and commitment. I asked Amanda in our second interview how long she thought she would stay in the teaching profession:

> Until I marry a millionaire. And considering I'm 34, it's not likely to happen. [laughs] No, I'll stay in it until I just don't get any more fun out of it. Until I just don't want to see the kids ever. I mean, I couldn't wait for Thanksgiving, but then, I couldn't wait to come back. And every year before, I've been like, "I don't want to go back." But I was ready to come back. I was ready to see the kids (December 9, 2009).

Amanda's response illustrated the idea that contentment with one's teaching assignment, which is influenced by context-specific environmental factors, affects one's commitment. Amanda explained that her teaching efficacy was heightened by, "Being at a school that's just really, really great" (December 9, 2009). Lucy explained that the support she felt from her colleagues at Lincoln MS was a chief reason she had taught there for four years and did not foresee leaving. Context-specific factors, including perceived support and faculty morale, seemed to contribute to teachers' perceptions of efficacy and thus their commitment to teaching.

Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy are often more committed to teaching (Coladarci, 1992). The relationship between commitment and efficacy seems to go both ways: in this study, teachers' commitment and their feelings about their assignment and workload were predictors of their perceptions of teaching efficacy. Perceptions of one's teaching assignment and workload are affected by school-specific factors, including faculty morale and perceived support. This information indicates that a relationship did exist between the teachers' perceptions of professional support (which manifested itself in a wide variety of ways) and their feelings of efficacy for the teaching task. The data revealing a trend between teaching efficacy and commitment, and comments from the case study participants can be summarized in three words: happy teachers stay.

BIG PICTURE FINDINGS

The self-efficacy beliefs of FL teachers in this study were correlated with their perceptions of support. Teachers' commitment to teaching, their teaching assignment and workload, and classroom climate were elements of their perceived support related to

their efficacy beliefs. Analysis of qualitative data from the four case study participants revealed that the FL teachers' efficacy beliefs were influenced by context-specific support, including how their content area was regarded in their schools. Furthermore, as they all pursued alternative routes to certification, the participants relied on their selected memories, making sense of their experiences as FL teachers via perspective they gained as FL learners.

From the cumulative data collected through this study, I have identified three "big picture" findings. First, based on participants' perspectives of FL as "the elective that doesn't matter," the perception of "Stepchild Syndrome"—which I define as the perceived devaluation of FL as a content area by administrators, colleagues, students, and other stakeholders—emerged. Second, I examine the speculative nature of teaching efficacy beliefs of alternatively certified FL teachers. Finally, the influence of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK; Shulman, 1986) on teachers' perceptions of professional support is considered.

Stepchild Syndrome

FL is a content area "at the margins." A required course, though treated as an elective, this non-tested content area is required for high school graduation in the state of Texas, but frequently is only nominally valued. This is seen in schools, where the influence of high-stakes testing often takes precedence over other content areas. Case study participants Lucy and Amanda appreciated the degree of freedom they experienced as a result of teaching a content area that was not subject to a standardized test.

However, the same teachers reported feeling "useless" and "out of the loop" within teaching contexts that exceedingly concentrated on high-stakes testing.

Marginalization experienced by FL teachers within Castlewood ISD was a notable trend during my interactions with informants throughout all phases of this study. Teacher participants and Mary Goodwin, program director of FL, described the positioning of FL teachers and FL as a content area using phrases including: "stepchild," "black sheep," "a nobody," "out of the loop," "useless," "overlooked," "the elective that doesn't matter," "doesn't fit," and, "it's important, but not as important." In reviewing the way that the FL teachers spoke about the way that others—including administrators, colleagues, and students—viewed their content area, it became evident that the FL teachers often felt shunned because of the content area that they taught. The marginalization teachers experienced was perceived to be related to the influence of high-stakes testing at their schools and throughout Castlewood ISD. Such marginalization presented itself through the devaluation of FL as a content area by administrators and colleagues, challenges of making the content relevant to students, and a lack of opportunities for relevant content-specific professional development.

Based on the terminology used by the participants in this study, I have labeled the experience of marginalization of FL teachers "Stepchild Syndrome." I define Stepchild Syndrome as the perceived devaluation of FL by administrators, colleagues, students, and other stakeholders. It is often characterized by professional isolation, a lack of relevant opportunities for support and professional development, and a shortage of pertinent or relevant resources for FL teaching, in comparison with the support and resources made

available for teachers of tested content areas. While there is a degree of freedom in being a teacher within a non-tested content area, Stepchild Syndrome may have detrimental effects on the efficacy beliefs, commitment, and professional growth of FL teachers. Furthermore, it may prove particularly challenging for novice teachers.

Ernesto felt that his status as a FL teacher meant that he was denied certain benefits given to teachers of tested content areas at Morgan MS. His schedule and limited opportunities for collaboration with colleagues contributed to this perception. Because Ernesto felt that teachers of tested content areas received more support at his school, he commented, "I feel like the stepchild. You take whatever's left and make the best of it" (December 9, 2009). Ernesto elaborated that he felt the administrators of his school viewed FL as a subject that was "important, but not *as* important" as the tested content areas (December 9, 2009). Consequently, he did not have multiple planning periods during the day nor opportunities for "teaming" with other teachers as did his colleagues of tested content areas.

Amanda commented that FL teachers, "get so overlooked most of the time" (December 9, 2009). From her perspective, FL was often viewed by administrators and other teachers as "the elective that doesn't matter" (December 9, 2009). Being "overlooked" was a way that FL teachers often felt under-valued by principals and colleagues.

Mary Goodwin noted that many of the teachers with her department frequently felt devalued on their campuses. This devaluation was evident in the physical separation of FL teachers—on campuses where principals moved FL teachers out the school

building and into portable buildings—and through postponing the hiring of FL teachers. Mary recounted how some principals waited until late in the summer to hire new teachers for open FL positions on their campuses. From her point of view, this practice reflected the lack of value many principals felt toward FL as a content area. In our first interview, Mary explained that part of her job as program director was to "make [FL teachers] feel like they're still respected and valued" (July 29, 2009). Though teacher participants agreed that Mary was immensely supportive and helpful to them, she alone could not counteract their experiences of feeling disregarded on their individual campuses.

FL teachers' opportunities for professional development also revealed how they were undervalued within Castlewood ISD. Widespread changes in the District's professional development for all in-service teachers in the 2009-10 school year reflected the influence of standardized testing. During in-service meetings, Mary was instructed to follow a Facilitator Script given to her by the District, to show the accompanying DVDs and PowerPoint presentations, and to follow the agenda for in-service days prescribed by the district.

These prescribed in-service meetings denied the need of teachers to receive support tailored to their particular content areas. This prescriptive approach did not sit well with a number of my participants. As Lucy asserted in our first interview, "We are not all doing the same thing" (October 27, 2009). The district's one-size-fits-all approach to teacher development ignored the varying needs of teachers of different content areas, instead focusing on general principles valued by the district. By commandeering an entire year of professional development, Castlewood ISD prevented Mary Goodwin from

planning sessions to meet the needs of teachers within her program and denied new teachers opportunities for content-specific growth on days which were allegedly dedicated to "development."

Amanda felt that the District-wide changes in professional development denied her the opportunity to work with and learn from Mary Goodwin and other FL teachers. Amanda saw Mary as a bonding point for teachers within the FL content area and valued the content-specific support of working with others in her subject area. Such support helps teachers develop their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which goes beyond knowledge of the content into knowing how to teach a particular subject (Shulman, 1986). According to Shulman, PCK includes:

> …understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons (1986, p. 9).

Such knowledge is essential for all teachers, perhaps more so for those who are new to the profession and those who come to teaching through alternative routes. PCK will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Amanda suspected that her opportunities for connecting with other FL teachers were pushed aside in order that Castlewood ISD could put additional focus on the "core" tested content areas. The limited opportunities for FL teachers' professional growth and enrichment, as well as the District's failure to appreciate their content area, have the potential effect of significantly decreasing teachers' morale, and thus perceptions of efficacy for FL teaching.

The effects of Stepchild Syndrome were also observed in teacher-participants' routes to certification. As all of the case study participants involved with this work were alternatively certified, none had the benefit of traditional university scholarship in their preparation to become FL teachers. Furthermore, none of their descriptions of their respective alternative certification programs included specific work in FL teaching methodologies. The lack of content-specific methods courses for FL teachers underscores how the content area is often overlooked in favor of the tested "core" content areas. Consequently, alternatively certified FL teachers have little, if any, chance to observe other teachers and become familiar with best practices for FL teaching prior to entering the field. Their in-service opportunities are also limited, due to the prevalence of professional isolation in the field. As a result, teachers' selected memories of their own FL teachers are all they have to rely on in forming their own teaching practices and beliefs. The impact of such selected memories and their results on teachers' perceptions of efficacy will be examined in the next section.

Though the teachers in this study felt marginalized due to the content area they taught, none mentioned the sociocultural, ideological, and political influences on the teaching of FL in American public schools. According to Crookes, "Languages and language teaching are political, and language teachers are political actors (or instruments) whether they like it or not" (p. 75). Ortega (1999) agrees that societal attitudes towards languages in general and the ownership of a language and culture by particular groups shape the professional goals and identities of FL educators.

According to Crookes (1997), "the way teachers teach is influenced by the effects of the social structures in which they are embedded," (p. 73) which is subject to the "hegemonic power of the dominant culture" (p. 74). Garcia (1992, as cited in Crookes, 1997) describes the perceived insignificance of FL study in the United States: "our difficulties as foreign language educators lie in teaching non-official languages (viewed as unimportant) in a *de facto* officially monolingual English-speaking context," (p. 19; as cited in Crookes, p. 74).

The marginalization of language teachers, and the resultant Stepchild Syndrome which may follow, is not a new problem. Crookes (1997) declares that, "ESL teachers in the US and other English-speaking countries are already marginalized, particularly because their constituency, their students, and the parents of their students do not come from the mainstream culture" (p. 73). Ortega (1999) asserts that many people view second and FL study through the lens of language-as-problem. This is marked by "conventional wisdom which connects non-English language heritage and circumstantial bilingualism with social problems" (p. 23). The notion of language-as-problem is evident in official and unofficial English-Only sentiments and policies. In the face of such charged ideas regarding the use of languages other than English, one may conclude that it is not exclusively the non-tested nature of FL that creates a sense of differential treatment for teachers of the content area.

Speculative Nature of Efficacy Beliefs

The literature on teaching efficacy describes the positive relationship between efficacy beliefs and a myriad of desirable teacher behaviors and characteristics. These

include greater levels of planning and organization, willingness to experiment with new ideas, greater patience with students' errors, and persistence and resilience in the face of setbacks (Chacón, 2005; Poulou, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2007) assert that efficacy beliefs are most adaptable when they are slightly beyond one's actual capabilities. However, data from this study revealed that for alternatively certified beginning FL teachers, beliefs about teaching efficacy prior to the beginning of the school year were based primarily on their selected memories, and as a result, were little more than a speculation prior to entering the classroom.

Ernesto Lima was the poster child for this phenomenon. As Ernesto lacked prior teaching experience, he had no source of mastery experiences from which to draw his beliefs about his teaching abilities (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Ernesto's lack of content-area colleagues limited his opportunities for observation of other Spanish teachers, and thus inhibited his efficacy beliefs from developing by virtue of vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997; Mulholland & Wallace, 2001). His lack of a specific mentor on his campus and trivial support he perceived from his certification program did not provide him with much verbal persuasion on which to base his beliefs about his effectiveness (Bandura, 1997). Physiological cues (Bandura, 1997) that Ernesto experienced—including stress, exhaustion, and isolation—did serve as a source of efficacy beliefs; they seemed to negatively impact his perceptions of efficacy for teaching.

Presumably, Ernesto's beliefs about his abilities to "make a difference" to his students, and his confidence for engaging his students, instructing them, and managing his classroom, were based on selected memories he obtained as a learner in the FL classroom. One might deduce that Ernesto's initial perceptions of his teaching efficacy abilities were founded on his own school biography (Britzman, 2003), including his memories of his teachers and how he compared himself with them. His "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) may have been a source of vicarious experiences, whereby Ernesto compared himself with his own teachers and felt assured that he could emulate their practices.

Schunk (1989) notes that vicarious experiences can be most influential when individuals are uncertain of their abilities or when they have limited or no prior experience. Britzman (2003) describes how teachers' "school biographies" influence their beliefs about teaching:

> Teachers bring to their work their own idiomatic school biography, the conflicted history of their own deep investments in and ambivalence about what a teacher is and does, and likewise they anticipate their dreams of students, their hopes for colleagues, and their fantasies for recognition and learning… The teacher's work brings new and conflictive demands that well exceed the resources of his or her school biography. (p.2)

The "new and conflictive demands" that beginning teachers face, which "well exceed the resources" of their selected memories may also result in the decline in their perceptions of teaching efficacy. Ernesto's beliefs about his own teaching were based in his selected memories of his experiences as a learner. His teaching self-efficacy beliefs fell sharply once he encountered the realities of the classroom. The "resources" of his vicarious

experiences were surpassed by the many demands Ernesto faced as an independent classroom teacher. Swanson (2010) states that, "self efficacy beliefs based on observing others succeed will diminish rapidly if observers subsequently have unsuccessful experiences of their own" (p. 51). Such was Ernesto's experience in his induction year.

Because alternatively certified teachers in Texas often enter the classroom after only a few weeks of training (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001), it seems that they may rely on their selected memories more than their colleagues with traditional university-based certification. As a result, their efficacy beliefs for teaching are merely a speculation and may decrease more quickly when faced with the realities of the classroom. This appeared to be the case for Ernesto, whose route to certification was "just two months of basic instruction on how to deal with kids" (October 27, 2009) before being assigned his own classroom. While all teachers' efficacy beliefs are subject to fluctuations during their first year in the classroom (Fives et al., 2007; Newman et al., 2000) it seems that such changes may be even more drastic for alternatively certified teachers. The predictive value of efficacy self-reports by alternatively certified teachers in their induction year may be minimal, as efficacy seems to be little more that a speculation—founded on one's own school biography and selected memories—at such a point.

The Influence of Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Lee Shulman (1986) states that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) goes beyond subject matter knowledge to include "subject matter knowledge *for teaching*." In this way, PCK entails "ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it

comprehensible to others" (p.9). Though PCK is a crucial component of teachers' knowledge, opportunities for developing PCK are not always afforded novice FL teachers.

In this study, FL teachers' perceptions of support and teaching efficacy were often connected with their opportunities—or lack thereof—for developing PCK. This was evident in their comments on having colleagues within the same content area, the availability of resources for FL teaching, opportunities for developing language proficiency, and descriptions of their alternative certification programs.

A number of the participants in this study expressed views that FL teaching pedagogy is unique from that of other content areas. As a result, they felt that support from others within their content area was often the most pertinent. Schunk (1989) asserts that in order for efficacy beliefs based on vicarious experiences to be meaningful, they must derive from "comparisons with those who are similar in the ability or characteristics being evaluated" (p. 16).

Lucy described how she was able to "freshen up" her teaching practices, instructional activities, and approaches to assessment through collaboration with her FL teaching colleagues on the campus of Lincoln MS. She explained that working with other FL teachers helped her "build [her] confidence even more" (October 27, 2009). By working with other FL teachers, Lucy's efficacy for teaching continued to grow.

Ernesto struggled as the only FL teacher at Morgan MS in his first year. He felt that as a FL teacher he had a "totally different teaching style" from other teachers on his campus, and that observing teachers of other content areas would be of little value to him,

due to the pedagogical differences between teaching FL and other subject areas. He believed that he might have had more success if he had taught high school as part of a FL department during his induction year. Ernesto's limited opportunities for advancing his PCK may have been related to decreases in his self-reported sense of teaching efficacy.

Amanda felt that her teaching environment was very supportive. However, she asserted that she would have benefitted from more opportunities to work with content-area peers. "There are just some days when you just really need… to be with your FL people, or your own groups" (October 27, 2009). Similar to Ernesto, Amanda felt that having more opportunities to work with other FL teachers would have been an asset to her continued professional growth.

PCK was also a theme in participants' views on resources for FL teaching. Carlos and Amanda both noted a shortage of resources specific to FL teaching and consequently extra time required of FL teachers to modify materials in order to suit the needs of their classrooms. Lucy agreed that in order to supplement the standard FL curriculum, one needed access to "realistic examples." Such materials are typically not found in workbooks and textbooks. Teaching the culture of the target language group—through the incorporation of realia—often requires travel and access to sources outside of the traditional school curriculum. These require time and finances, both of which are commonly in short supply for beginning teachers.

When asked about opportunities for developing foreign language proficiency, Lucy remarked that, "[Mary] encourages us once we get into French [teacher] groups to use French, and sometimes we do, sometimes we don't" (December 10, 2009).

Otherwise, as all four respondents indicated, opportunities for continued development of language proficiency—a hallmark of content knowledge for FL teachers—were non-existent within the District. Ernesto and Amanda mentioned travel and study abroad programs for continued development of language proficiency, as did Lucy, who jokingly stated that Castlewood's FL teachers needed, "paid vacations to your target country!" (December 10, 2009). Opportunities for travel to areas where one's content-language is spoken were identified by all of the informants as a distinctive need of FL teachers in contrast with the needs of teachers of other content areas. FL content knowledge, marked by language proficiency, cannot be easily acquired through books and study, but instead requires interaction with others who speak the language as well as opportunities to experience the culture. Though travel is such an essential component for FL teachers to acquire linguistic and cultural awareness, the time and cost required to do so are often prohibitive. Both Lucy and Amanda identified the inability to afford the financial cost of such programs as a reason for their limited participation. Though none of the participants in this study specifically mentioned FL proficiency as an influence on their perceptions of teaching efficacy, this trend has been noted in the work of Chacón (2005).

The need for novice FL teachers to develop PCK also seemed to be neglected in their alternative routes to teacher certification. The lack of content-specific methods courses in most alternative certification programs seemed to underscore teachers' knowledge of pedagogy at the expense of content (Shulman, 1986). Without opportunities to gain experiences in FL teaching methodologies, alternatively certified FL teachers relied on their selected memories to guide their teaching practices. With such

limited curricular knowledge, beginning FL teachers may lack the understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult and how to communicate "those most frequently taught topics and lessons" most effectively to students with a wide variety of backgrounds. Shulman (1986) questions, "Would we trust a physician who did not really understand the alternative ways of dealing with categories of infectious disease, but who knew only one way?" (p. 10).

Shulman (1986, 2007) also describes the role of the "wisdom of practice," which he defines as "the accumulated lore of teaching experience" (1986, p. 9) on teachers' PCK. Shulman later elaborates that the wisdom of practice is comprised of the "full range of practical arguments engaged by practitioners as they reason about and ultimately make judgments and decisions about situations they confront and actions they must take" (2007, p. 560). This definition of wisdom of practice brings to mind Bandura's (1997) concept of mastery experience. The two ideas may even be interchangeable when considering teachers' sources of efficacy beliefs. Shulman explains that teachers often rely on their wisdom of practice to "reason about their opinions and make their decisions" (2007, p. 561). It stands to reason that the wisdom of practice might also be a source on which teachers derive judgments about their abilities to perform teaching tasks.

Through mastery experiences, people develop beliefs about their capabilities to perform certain tasks. Successes or failures in such undertakings influence perceptions of efficacy for specific tasks. Success typically strengthens one's perceptions of efficacy, while experiencing failure weakens efficacy beliefs. Bandura asserts that "…mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide

the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed" (1997, p. 80).

IMPLICATIONS

Beginning FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy do appear to be related to their perceptions of professional support. Because there is a relationship between these two elements, particular attention should be paid to the best ways of supporting beginning FL teachers. Castlewood ISD offers a two day "New Teacher Academy" in which teachers new to the District meet with Mary and other FL colleagues prior to the beginning of the school year. However, as Lucy stated, prior to the beginning of the school year, "you don't really know what you have questions about. You don't really have any idea. You're just taking it all in" (October 27, 2009). The New Teacher Academy may serve as a starting point, and provides an opportunity for new FL teachers to make connections with one another. However, it must be supplemented in order to be most effective.

Mary also held quarterly meetings after school for the District's new FL teachers. Lucy and Amanda both reported taking part in similar meetings during their initial year(s) with Castlewood. Amanda described being able to "vent frustrations and bring up concerns" during these informal gatherings of beginning FL teachers that Mary arranged. Mary noted, however, that the New Teacher meetings "were not truly well attended" during the 2009-10 school year. She felt this was because a number of the teachers new to the District were not new to the profession. When I asked Ernesto about his

participation in New Teacher meetings Mary arranged for beginning FL teachers, he responded, "No, I haven't heard of anything like that" (December 9, 2009).

Beginning FL teachers' struggles with their assignment and workload indicate that special attention should be focused on the schedules of new teachers. Ernesto and Carlos both found their lack of planning time challenging as they navigated their first year(s) as teachers. Perhaps by ensuring that beginning teachers have a break between classes each day would provide some time and relief for new teachers. Scheduling could further benefit novice FL teachers if they had opportunities for collaboration, observation, and reflection—ideally with colleagues within the same content area—available during the school day.

In addition to time for planning and collaboration with colleagues, beginning FL teachers need authentic mentoring. Many of the case study participants in this study reported having nominal "mentors" who often did not offer the type of support the FL teachers needed and hoped for. As I did not set out to explore the training of mentors for beginning FL teachers in Castlewood ISD, I do not have data concerning how they are prepared. However, it seems that relevant training for mentors would be an essential component of teaching them about their roles and expectations for creating effective mentor/mentee relationships.

In addition to having supportive mentors, beginning FL teachers, particularly those who are alternatively certified, might benefit from additional opportunities to have non-evaluative feedback regarding their teaching (Watzke, 2007). Such feedback, provided by a mentor or content-area colleague, would address teachers' strengths and

areas for continued improvement. By working with someone in a non-evaluative capacity, FL teachers could benefit from having an individual to work with and turn to for guidance and advice as they strive to make improvements within their teaching.

An issue that plagues FL teachers initially and potentially over the duration of their careers is professional isolation and marginalization they may experience as a result of being language teachers. Perhaps by fostering communities of practice, through participation in the language teaching community and/or through informal gatherings of teachers outside of school, FL teachers could expand their network of content-area colleagues. According to Smith (2000), "working and sharing with other practitioners in the language teaching community, learning the discourse of that community…and associating… with certain local, regional, and national groups through official membership have given me a professional identity and sense of belonging that have enabled me to progress" (p. 21). Fostering FL teachers' "sense of belonging" may help them to overcome feelings of professional isolation and engage with other colleagues in meaningful ways, both in and out of the classroom.

Beginning teachers in any content area are often overwhelmed by the demands required of them as they adjust to their new roles as emergent professionals. A lack of time and lack of resources may intensify the feelings of stress and challenges that new teachers face. As a result, they may experience a lack of energy for any activities outside of the classroom. Even the best-laid induction plans may prove fruitless if beginning teachers lack the time and energy for, or otherwise choose not to participate. However, by having a network of support, new teachers may more easily overcome the many trials

they face in their beginning years. Additionally, relevant professional support may bolster teachers' perceptions of efficacy beliefs, and result in greater commitment to the FL teaching profession.

QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study set out to investigate factors that influence FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy and the potential relationship between their teaching efficacy and professional support. While a number of interesting themes emerged from working with the FL teachers of Castlewood ISD, a number of new questions were also raised. One of the major areas which often generated more questions than answers was teachers' alternative routes to certification. The role of alternative certification on FL teachers' perceptions of teaching efficacy is a worthwhile area for further study.

In the quantitative component of this study, only a handful (n=12) of respondents identified themselves as alternatively certified teachers. While certification did not emerge in any of the quantitative analysis as a significant factor in teachers' self-reports of efficacy or perceptions of support, one wonders how that finding might change if more alternatively certified teachers were surveyed. Further studies should seek out more alternatively certified FL teachers and investigate how their struggles and challenges compare with those of their traditionally certified peers in their induction year. Correspondingly, the potential role of certification type on teachers' changing efficacy beliefs during their first year in the classroom is an area worth of continued exploration. Given the continued growth of alternative routes to certification, the retention and/or

attrition of alternatively certified FL teachers in contrast with those with traditional certification might also prove a valuable area for investigation.

Of the four case study participants involved in this study, Carlos Peralta was the most vocal regarding the support he perceived from his alternative certification program. Carlos's program, as he described it, was also quite distinctive from those in which Lucy, Amanda, and Ernesto took part. The program in which Carlos participated was more intense, involved, and longer in duration that alternative certification programs described by other case study participants. It also differed in that Carlos was working toward a Master's of Education concurrent with teacher certification.

Carlos's descriptions of his alternative certification program left the impression that he received abundant support from his involvement in the program, while at the same time having opportunities to "unpack" his experiences in the classroom. From his description, Carlos's alternative certification program seemed akin to a Professional Development Sequence one might find in many traditional university-based routes to certification. Carlos's perceptions of teaching efficacy decreased very slightly over the course of his first semester in the classroom, presumably due in part to the extraordinary amount of support he perceived from his certification program. Carlos's case causes me to wonder, is this a better way?

Darling-Hammond, Berry, and Thoreson (2001) compared alternative routes to certification in a number of states across the country. They found that in certain states, including Texas, districts or the state itself offered routes to certification, "that offered a few weeks of training before the teachers could take on a class and required a total of as

little as 200 seat hours of training" (p. 62). In contrast, other states, including Connecticut and New York, "require a Master's degree on top of a strong subject matter degree for full professional (standard) certification" (p. 62). They assert that teachers who participate in "alternative certification in 'high standards' states are subject to higher selection standards and receive a substantially more rigorous professional preparation than either 'regular' or 'alternative' certification candidates in 'low standards' states" (Darling Hammond, Berry, Thoreson, p. 63). Do the teaching efficacy beliefs of teachers who participate in more rigorous alternative routes to certification vary from those who enter the classroom through less demanding means? As this study found a relationship between efficacy beliefs and commitment to the profession, further case studies to investigate the variance in perceptions of efficacy based on the type of alternative certification teachers pursue would benefit the field.

Furthermore, marginalization of FL as a content area was suggested by the lack of content-specific methodology courses in alternative routes to teacher certification. However, content-specific methodology courses may also be lacking in many traditional university-based teacher certification programs. Are there differences in the efficacy beliefs of FL teachers who graduate from programs which specifically prepare teachers for FL teaching (instead of lumping them together with all other "secondary" teachers)? If content-specific methodology courses make a difference for teachers' confidence for FL teaching, and concomitantly their commitment to the profession, they would seem to be of great value in preparing tomorrow's FL classroom teachers.

In addition to further work on the relationship between alternative certification and teachers' efficacy beliefs, the phenomenon of "Stepchild Syndrome" deserves further inquiry. Does "Stepchild Syndrome" affect FL teachers teaching for other Districts across the state? Do teachers of other non-tested content areas (i.e. music, art, physical education) report the same perceived devaluation?

LIMITATIONS AND CONCERNS

One of the principal limitations of this study is the relatively small number of respondents who completed the quantitative surveys as part of this study. Further research should investigate the perceptions of support and teaching efficacy beliefs of a larger population of FL teachers in order to further examine factors impacting their efficacy beliefs.

Furthermore, the inclusion of only four case study participants makes the findings and theories emergent from this study impossible to generalize to a larger population. In addition, as I was only able to collect data from the participants over the course of one semester, I potentially missed out on further changes in the teachers' perceptions of efficacy—particularly of the first year teachers—over the full course of the academic year. Studies of longer duration would better examine the fluctuations in novice FL teachers' efficacy beliefs.

The physical distance between my home and Castlewood ISD (some 170 miles) also prohibited me from visiting participants' classrooms more frequently. The study might have been enhanced if I had opportunities to visit with and observe the teacher-participants more often throughout the fall of 2009.

As the primary instrument of data collection, I brought my own experiential, cultural, and personal biases to the study. Though I aimed to be aware of my own biases throughout all phases of the study, this research was filtered through my own experience and worldview from start to finish. I hold responsibility for any and all errors and inadvertent omissions throughout the research process and final report.

Appendix A: Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale[1] (short form)

	Teacher Beliefs	How much can you do?								
	Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.	Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite A Bit		A Great Deal
1.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

Appendix B: Perceptions of Success Inventory

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us get a better understanding of the kinds of support that are helpful for foreign language teachers. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The administration at my school encourages me to be an effective teacher.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
2. I have mentors or exemplary teachers within my content area to whom I look for support.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
3. At this point in my career, I have the support I need to be an effective teacher.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
4. My mentor or an exemplary teacher has provided assistance with classroom management.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
5. I have at least one period per day that I can devote to planning for my classes.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
6. I think I will be teaching 5 years from now.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
7. I believe that students are motivated to learn in my classroom.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
8. I feel in control when I am teaching.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
9. The administration at my school provides effective feedback after observations.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
10. I have common planning times with other foreign language teachers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
11. My mentor or an exemplary teacher has provided assistance with instructional concerns.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
12. My teaching assignment is realistic for someone with my level of experience.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
13. Teaching is a calling.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
14. My students achieve success in my classroom.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
15. I think about my professional conduct in light of moral and ethical standards.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
16. I have curriculum provided for me that aligns with the state curricula guidelines.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
17. The administration at my school gives suggestions for communicating with caregivers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
18. I have opportunities for meaningful conversation with other teachers at my level of experience in a setting free of evaluation.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
19. My mentor or an exemplary teacher has provided assistance related to communication with caregivers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
20. My overall teaching workload is reasonable.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
21. I know I made the right decision to teach.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
22. The discipline at my school is supportive of a good learning environment for my students.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. I tend to make thoughtful judgments when faced with moral problems in the school or classroom.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
24. All of my students have textbooks or workbooks as needed.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
25. The administration at my school provides appropriate feedback for my discipline decisions.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
26. I have opportunities to visit and observe exemplary teachers.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
27. My mentor or an exemplary teacher is empathetic.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
28. I enjoy teaching the students at my school.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
29. The discipline in my classroom is supportive of a good learning environment for my students.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
30. When I have professional concerns, I take action responsibly.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
31. I have the curriculum and materials I need to teach effectively.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
32. The administration has oriented me to the school and staff.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
33. I collaborate with exemplary teachers regarding curriculum.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
34. My mentor or an exemplary teacher encourages me to reflect about my teaching.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
35. I feel that I am making a difference by becoming a teacher.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
36. The parents or caregivers of my students are supportive of their child's progress in school.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
37. I have participated in decision making on school policy.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
38. I have developed clear routines and procedures for my classroom that are aligned with school policy.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
39. I collaborate with exemplary teachers regarding instructional strategies.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
40. My mentor or an exemplary teacher meets with me on a weekly basis to discuss learning and teaching.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
41. I see teaching as a long-term career.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
42. The parents or caregivers of my students are supportive of me as a teacher.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
43. I have opportunities to take leadership roles as desired.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
44. I have opportunities to engage in meaningful professional development.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

Appendix C: Survey Cover Letter

You are invited to participate in a survey, entitled "Content-Specific Support and Beginning Foreign Language Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy." The study is being conducted by Mitsi Pair Willard, PhD candidate in Foreign Language Education of The University of Texas at Austin, 2833 Brandywine Cir., Bryan, TX, 77807, mitsipair@mail.utexas.edu.

The purpose of this study is to examine the types of content-specific professional support available to foreign language teachers. Your participation in the survey will contribute to a better understanding of how professional support impacts teachers' perceptions of success for teaching foreign languages. We estimate that it will take about 15 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire. You are free to contact the investigator in person or at the above address and phone number to discuss the survey.

Risks to participants are considered minimal. There will be no costs for participating, nor will you benefit from participating. Information regarding your teaching position, years of experience, and language(s) taught will be kept during the data collection phase for analysis purposes only. This information will be used for research purposes only, and will not be involved in evaluation of your performance as a teacher.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and will not impact your current or future standing with Fort Worth ISD or the University of Texas at Austin. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you wish to withdraw from the study or have any questions, contact the investigator listed above.

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board. If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact - anonymously, if you wish - the Institutional Review Board by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

IRB Approval Number: **2009-04-0031**

If you agree to participate please fill out the attached surveys. When you have finished, please return the packet to the designated location. This cover letter is yours to keep.

Thank you!

Appendix D: Case Study Volunteer Recruitment Letter

Volunteers needed!

If you have between 0-3 years of experience teaching World Languages and would be interested in sharing your perspective on the teaching experience, please provide your contact information below:

Name: _____

School: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Preferred means of contact: Email _____ Phone _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

By completing this information, you are not obligated to participate. Your decision to participate in this study is voluntary and will not affect your current or future standing with Fort Worth ISD, or the University of Texas at Austin. Should you choose to volunteer, means will be taken to ensure your privacy and confidentiality.

This information will be kept confidential, and will be used strictly for purposes of this research study. It will not be shared with anyone else.

If you have questions about the study or how you can participate, please contact Mitsi Pair Willard, mitsipair@mail.utexas.edu.

Appendix E: Demographic Data Survey

Gender: _____ Female _____ Male

Age: _____ years

What do you consider your first/native language(s)?

_____

In what other language(s) do you have proficiency?
Please rate your proficiency as Novice (N), Intermediate (I), Advanced (A), or Superior (S).

Language	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Listening	How did you gain this proficiency in this language?

Teaching Experience

School District & Location	Subject(s) Taught	Grade Level(s)	Start Date	End Date

Teacher Certification

Name of University or Certification Program	Start Date	End Date	In which Subject(s)/Grade Level(s) are you certified?

Appendix F: Case Study Participant Consent Letter

Title: Support and Beginning Foreign Language Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy
IRB PROTOCOL #2009-04-0031
Conducted By: Mitsi Pair Willard
Of The University of Texas at Austin: Foreign Language Education
Telephone: 817-681-3164 E-mail: mitsipair@mail.utexas.edu

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this study is to explore the types of content-specific professional support available to beginning foreign language (FL) teachers in a major urban public school district in Texas. The study also seeks to describe beginning FL teachers' perceptions of personal teaching efficacy, taking into consideration their experiences with content-specific professional support.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Agree to be interviewed by the researcher regarding your experiences with support as a beginning teacher and your perceptions of efficacy for teaching FL.
- Write a brief Professional Autobiography reflecting on your motivations becoming a FL teacher, your training, and experiences as a beginning teacher.
- Complete the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale, and allow the researcher to review your self-reported results.

Total estimated time to participate in study is 3 hours.

Risks of being in the study

- This interaction may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

Benefits of being in the study

- Opportunity to voice your opinions on support for beginning FL teachers within your district, while maintaining confidentiality of your identity.
- Add to the knowledge of beginning teachers' perceptions of efficacy and how those are impacted by content-specific support.
- Contribute to our understanding of theory and practice in the field of foreign language teaching.

Compensation:

- No financial compensation is provided in this study.

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

- ***TO PROTECT YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY, PSEUDONYMS WILL BE USED FOR PARTICIPANTS, NAMES OF SCHOOLS, AND DISTRICTS.***
- Participants will have an opportunity to review transcripts of interviews and interpretations to ensure that their actions and words are reflected accurately and appropriately.
- ***INTERVIEWS WILL BE AUDIO RECORDED USING A DIGITAL VOICE RECORDER***
- Audio files will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them
- Audio files will be stored in a password-protected folder on the investigator's computer
- Audio files will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator and her associates
- To make possible future analysis, the investigator will retain the recordings in a password-protected file on her external hard drive.
- The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support at (512) 471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

We may wish to present some of the audio files from this study at scientific conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to do so with your audio files.

I hereby give permission for the audio files made for this research study to also be used for educational purposes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix G: Interview Protocol—Program Director

1. What opportunities for growth and development are available for beginning FL teachers within this district?

2. What types of support are in place for beginning FL teachers within this district?

3. What specific needs do beginning FL teachers have?

4. How is professional development for beginning teachers different from that for more experienced teachers?

5. How is FL teaching different from other content areas? How is supporting FL teachers different from supporting teachers in other content areas?

6. What influences how you plan professional development for beginning teachers?

7. What considerations do you make in planning professional development for beginning teachers?

8. How do you ensure that professional development activities and support are relevant to the needs of beginning teachers?

9. Who is responsible for hiring FL teachers for the district? What do you look for when hiring new teachers?

10. What measures do you take to retain FL teachers within the district?

11. What are some reasons that FL teachers have left this district?

Appendix H: Interview Protocol—Novice Teachers

Interview #1

1. What motivated you to enter the FL teaching field? Has that motivation changed now that you are a teacher? If so, in what ways?
2. What strengths do you feel that you bring to the teaching profession? What makes you a good FL teacher? What sorts of successes have you had a classroom teacher?
3. What have been some of the biggest challenges you faced/experiences as a classroom teacher?
4. What/who has had the greatest influence on your self-perceptions of confidence as a teacher?
5. Who do you talk to about your teaching?
6. Thinking back on your perceptions of FL teaching before you entered the profession and now that you have ____ years of experience, what has changed? How have your perceptions of yourself as a FL teacher changed?
7. Do you think FL teaching is different from teaching in other content areas? In what ways?

Interview #2

1. What sorts of professional development specific for FL teachers has been available for you?
    a. What have you participated in? Why did you decide to participate in those activities?
    b. Is there anything that has kept you from participating in certain activities?

2. How useful do you feel the professional development opportunities available to you have been? Are there types of support you wish you had received, but didn't?
3. What opportunities do you have to develop your language proficiency?
4. How do you feel that the support opportunities/professional development opportunities available to you as a FL teacher compare with those available for teachers in other content areas?
5. Has anyone observed your teaching/given you feedback?
6. Has the support provided to you as a beginning teacher had any effect on your self-confidence for teaching? In what ways?
7. If you were in charge of deciding what types of support/professional development would be available for beginning FL teachers, what would you want to include?
8. How long do you see yourself in the teaching profession? How long do you see yourself teaching for this district? What variables will impact your decision to remain in the profession/district?

Appendix I: Castlewood ISD Professional Development Timeline

Appendix J: Case Study Participants' Mean TSES Scores

Teachers' Mean TSES Scores				
	Total	Classroom Management	Student Engagement	Instructional Strategies
FL Teachers	7.49	7.84	6.96	7.67
Lucy	7.17	7.25	7.25	7.00
Amanda	7.50	7.75	7.00	7.75
Ernesto 1	8.33	8.75	8.25	8.00
Ernesto 2	6.50	5.50	6.25	7.75
Carlos 1	7.67	8.00	7.50	7.50
Carlos 2	7.42	7.75	7.00	7.50
*Note: "*1" indicates scores reported in August; "2" indicates scores reported in December.				

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